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CARIBBEE CRUISE

A Book of the West Indies

Books by John W. Vandercook

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CARIBBEE CRUISE

CARIBBEE CRUISE

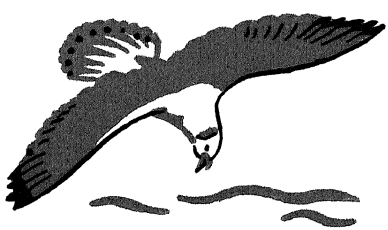
A Book of the West Indies

BY JOHN W. VANDERCOOK

Illustrated by Theodore Nadejen

REYNAL & HITCHCOCK

NEW YORK



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To Elise and Coleman
and Harwood Hull . .
Affectionately

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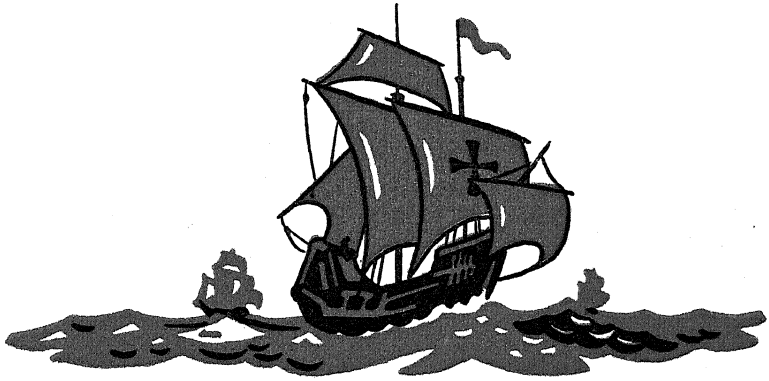


I—*DISCOVERY*

OTHERS had come first.

The Greeks, in their age of wisdom, had talked of it, of a peopled land somewhere beyond the western sea. It is not likely the tale was pure fancy. In men's imagination seeds of fact may be nourished into strange forests. But some substantial particle of truth comes first. No legend is born whole-fashioned out of air. And the legend of Atlantis had substance through long years. Some evidence there must have been.

But whatever it was—the record of a long-oared bark of heroes that drifted west, or a tale brought back and forever remembered of a trader out of Carthage who sought some land beyond the coast of Africa—the proof was lost, effaced in the dust and darkness of two thousand years.

At last, when spring came round once more and the men of the Renaissance began their immortal rummaging in the attics of the past, the myth was found again, and followed.

All myths were, in those inquiring years. With the alert new fashion, the old story now was disciplined with logic.

In the 15th Century men knew the world was round. Long before Columbus even, Popes knew that. "Virtually everyone," casually wrote Pius II, in 1481, "is agreed." To the legend of lands westward was added, therefore, the confusion of partial knowledge. The confusion lay in measurement. Vastly far to the east, as travellers by land caravan had known for centuries, lay China and beyond that Japan—or Zipangu, as they spelt it then. If the world was round those rich lands could be reached by sea. So much was obvious, though the trip might certainly be perilous. But the learned, those with knowledge of arcs and mathematics, insisted the distance would be impractically great. Indeed, did the Americas not intervene, it would be—and it is. The optimistic believed the distance to the coast of Asia would be slight. A popular figure, for some reason, was 700 leagues, something over 2000 modern miles.

Some captains had actually made the journey. There is no doubt of it. But who they were no one knows now, nor ever will. They are formless, gallant figures, without destiny, name or nation. They were poets and fools; poets to have adventured so far and so bravely, fools to have been satisfied with the quest alone, to have made no other profit from it.

They made their records and went their ways.

A map published by a Genoese cosmographer in 1434 and still extant, shows Cuba. The island is marked "Antilia" but it is not ill-drawn, nor very wrongly placed. On the page is the notation "newly discovered island." The globe of a learned scholar, a Jew named Martin Behaim, issued in Columbus'

youth, showed Brazil. Clearly the new world had been found, the existence of trans-ocean territories established and definitely noted. But the trickle of facts had not sapped the giant walls of Europe's isolation. The time, perhaps, was not ripe. . . .

So the Discovery was left to a travelling salesman.

The father of Christopher Columbus * was a weaver. Once for a time he kept a wine and cheese shop, but he went bankrupt and was jailed for it. So he returned to weaving and his sons Bartholomew and Christopher went on the road for him. Their territory was limited, for the output from the household loom was small, and until he was eighteen Christopher had probably never gone any farther than the suburbs of his native Genoa. But he seems to have practiced his profession ably. One need not doubt it. His life proved that no greater salesman ever lived.

Before he was twenty, a great Genoese trading house sent Christopher Columbus on a trip to the Near East with a line of dry goods. Later, representing the same firm, he was sent to England. So much have modern scholars extricated from the webs of the Columbus legend. Their task has been difficult, for no one sought more earnestly to tangle it than did the Discoverer himself. An ancestry for himself of blazing eminence and staggering antiquity was a part of his stock in trade, a necessity for that long enterprise upon which he soon engaged himself, the promotion of that incredible man—Christopher Columbus. A forebear who was a Roman general,

* Modern scholarship is substantially agreed on the facts of Columbus' life as set down here. The familiar myths have been dropped with peculiar unanimity.

another who was a count of Italy, French admirals and a Byzantine Emperor, were all included in his own marvellous tale of himself.

Chance put him on the Peninsular. The convoy of ships on which he was bound to England—as a passenger, for neither then nor later did the Great Navigator know much of seamanship nor anything of navigation—was attacked off the coast of Portugal by a French fleet. Three ships were sunk, but the others, with Columbus on board one of them, limped into Lisbon. The voyage to England was later completed, then he came back to Portugal. He worked there as a clerk in a branch office of his firm. But his dream was taking form.

He was a tall, long-nosed, blond young man, an elaborate and impressive talker. The Americas might have had to wait generations more for their effective discovery had he had the slightest trace of humor. Columbus was great, transcendently great in one particular; not in his belief, against all evidence, that a new seaway lay westward, but in his belief, against all evidence, in himself.

He was poor, obscure, utterly unequipped for the great project he was fashioning. The passion for exploration which developed in him was nourished not upon learning, or books of learning, but upon the most fanciful and inexact travel romances then extant, most of them long since discarded by intelligent judges. A few volumes remain with marginal notations in his own hand. The comments have a boyish quality. . . . One sees the tall young clerk, the unwieldy parchment books held close to the candlelight, his lips slowly moving, his eyes still through long abstractions. . . .

The truth is so much more interesting than the myth that

has been made of him. Fitly he was the first American, chief exponent in all history of the American belief that class and circumstance are nothing if the will for success is strong enough. The perils of the unknown seas which Columbus imagined and proved from fanciful works that proved nothing merely added to his self-importance. What clerk who has ever dreamed of voyaging or of himself as a great captain, has ever dreamed of voyaging safely?

His self-conviction carried weight. It always does. His social and intellectual betters were impressed by him—far more, in fact, than were his inferiors. . . . While he was in Lisbon Columbus married well. His bride was the daughter of the Governor of one of the Portuguese Madeira islands. Through his "connections" he soon met the King of Portugal.

His plan, by now, was exactly formed. He never shifted from it. It was overwhelming in its effrontery. Though a sailor or a street boy might laugh, no King or great courtier could hear it and not be impressed. For it matched their own pretension; whether they chose it or not, the proposal that Columbus made placed him somehow on a footing with them.

Columbus—who knew nothing of the sea, who had never held an official post, who at no time had commanded anyone or anything—would undertake a voyage of discovery, only provided that his terms were met. They were these. The King would appoint him Grand Admiral of the Western Sea. He should be viceregent for life of all lands discovered. He should have the privilege of appointing the governors of such lands. He and his heirs forever should collect ten per cent of all profits derived from his discoveries. The King would provide the fleet and meet all expenses.

The King of Portugal did not accept this preposterous offer. But neither did he despise nor forget the man who had made it. No cat in any bag had ever had such a price put on it, nor been offered by so great a salesman. The sheer extravagance of the cost made one itch to peek. Refusal, despite all better judgment, made one restless.

Turned down by Portugal, but gently, almost hesitantly, Columbus some time later drifted on to Spain. His Portuguese wife had died, and he took his son Diego (whose big, gaunt-windowed house still stands above the river in Santo Domingo) with him. His pretensions—nothing else—made him promptly comfortable. There is no reason to believe in the school-book stories of Columbus' years of slight and poverty. He at once reached the orbit of the Spanish court and stayed there. Soon, for no apparent reason, he even began receiving a small pension. He was pious, earnest . . . mysterious. All those qualities made him a figure of interest.

It did take him seven years to reach and convince Isabella. But the miracle is that he ever managed it at all. For he had held without swerving to his terms, every item of them. At last, though, Grenada fell, the long task of winning back Spain from the Moors was done, the lances of Europe's emotions were poised and restless. . . . Besides, the whole enterprise was only going to cost $7000!

What was more, Christopher Columbus had met the Pinzons and at last was really ready. That may have had some weight.

The Pinzons were a prosperous family of sailors and shipmasters of Palos, a then important port, now shrunk to a small village, on the southwest coast of Spain, not far from the fron-

tier of Portugal. The Pinzons had apparently made up their minds, purely as a commercial enterprise, to attempt a westward exploration before they ever heard of Columbus. Martin Pinzon, the head of the family, had consulted experts and had acquired a copy of one of the maps that showed Antilia. The Pinzons were merchants and the scheme seemed promising. If they could reach Asia by a short sea route they might profit enormously. They were simply going to up-anchor some day soon and sail. It had not occurred to them to ask anyone to make them Admirals or Viceroys.

But Columbus, by the time the Pinzons met him, had become a figure of some prominence at court, his friends were many and influential. To combine with him added a savour, an importance which their own matter-of-fact proposal had lacked. A partnership, both parties agreed, might prove mutually advantageous.

The understanding between them, however, had been reached before Isabella had been finally convinced. When she had completely capitulated and Columbus returned to Palos with as high-sounding a collection of official papers as a man has ever carried, it is recorded that he tried to drop the Pinzons. They spoilt his adventure a little. They were far too reasonably equipped.

Fortunately—fortunately because without them it is most unlikely Columbus would ever have reached anywhere—Christopher's powers of persuasion for the first time failed him. Grandees, Queens and Archbishops had believed him. The sailors of the port of Palos would not. It was eminently clear to them that the sombre, oratorical man with the grey-blond hair knew not enough of navigation to get them safely

past Portugal. His splendid papers and titles impressed them not a bit. Not one would agree to sail with him. No one.

The Pinzons were generous. When, humbled, Columbus came back to them, they for some reason were willing to resume their bargain. One wonders why they did not push the pretentious bluffer off the pier end. But perhaps he had impressed the Pinzons too. After all, he had a vision they had not. He must have carried some gleam of it with him. . . . He spoke of a way to the East. Yet in his contracts there was mention of new lands to be found and governed. There was an obvious contradiction. Cathay and Zipangu were not new lands. Certainly Christopher Columbus could not appoint their governors. Formless yet glowing, was the spark of the truth, of the wonder that was coming. It was a truth that to the day of his death the Admiral never quite grasped—yet never wholly lost.

. . . . . .

Time, there across the seas, had halted. Those fairest of the world's islands had been like some forsaken garden in a timeless dream, with the shadow on the dial forever still at noon.

The West Indies were populated. But the people who lived on them were primitive. Their customs were fixed, their societies traditional. In such a world, with no winters to mark their passing, years and centuries had slipped by uncounted. The Arawaks and Caribs, "Indians," as Columbus in his geographical confusion was to call them, of course had history. But its incidents were small and never long remembered. Chiefs had died and been replaced. Villages were moved because the soil of the garden patches round them had become

sterile. There were fierce, brief wars between tribes of hill or shore. But the Indians of the West Indies had no written language, and when there are no records men's memories fail quickly. Each year seemed much like others.

They were gone so soon, mown down by the wind of the world's most swift and colossal adventure, that little is known of them.

So far as information can be pieced together, the aboriginal West Indians were of the Arawak type—called Borinquen in Puerto Rico, Yucayos in the Bahamas, Ciboneys in Cuba—a quiet-mannered race of black-haired, golden-skinned people of strong and stocky build. They slept in the most ingenious of their inventions—hammocks, lived in simply built and often-replaced huts made of thatch and palm branches, and patiently tilled the soil for their livings, fishing little and hunting scarcely at all. Their sole vice, destined to become the world's favorite, was smoking tobacco.

The Caribs had come later to the islands. They were of another breed and a different temper.

They have a tale of where they came from. Since no one knows a better one, it may as well be set down. It was told to me by an old chieftain with a hard cold mouth and still fierce eyes in one of the last meagre settlements left to the Caribs on earth, beyond forest and desert in the interior of Dutch Guiana, on the South American mainland. In the islands of the sea they gave their name to, except for a tiny, mixed-breed handful on the British island of Dominica, there are no Caribs left at all . . . none of all the countless hoard who long ago cut like a scythe through all the lands of the

Caribbean as far north as Florida, who once were regarded as the most formidable and terrible people on the earth.

The surviving pure-blood Caribs of Guiana probably do not number over six hundred. Their several villages are widely separated and to reach them one must go some distance inland by a once-a-week railroad, walk several miles through high jungle, paddle for many hours by dugout canoe up a narrow, winding creek and at last walk again across sand desert.

The Carib huts are rectangular in shape and have arched thatched roofs that do not quite reach the ground at either side. Both ends of the building are open and within is slung the hammock of the man of the house—usually occupied by the gentleman himself. Near it is a small fire on the floor presided over by his wife. Bows, clay pots, wicker fishnets and a litter of small possessions are balanced on cross beams overhead. The floor is of clean, hard-packed earth. A few yards away, since they like to build by the edge of the desert, is the intricately beautiful, almost solid wall of the high forest.

Several such huts stand, without formal town-plan, near each other, and a little apart is a similar, but barer, hut occupied by the village peimon, or witchman. In it is a round hide drum painted on head and sides with a patterning of scarlet, some gourds of watered lime for ceremonial purposes, and various fragments of hide and fur, the materials of the occupant's trade of healing, discipline and magic.

Like it, probably, were the villages of the Caribs in the islands at the time of the discovery.

Ages ago, the old chief told me, his people had lived by the great rivers far away to the south, near where now is Paraguay. They were a strong people, able in the arts of living,

and as the generations passed their numbers grew. Since food-getting under a tropical sun is not easy, because game is quickly killed off and cleared fields are soon exhausted by the sun and the great rains, eventually the numbers of the tribe increased beyond the capacity of their lands to bear them. Some move had to be made.

The tribe was called the Guarani, but among them was a class—the old chieftain said—of aristocrats, of men of superior strength and wisdom. The people of this class were called *Caraibes*—(he made four syllables of it), the name that European tongues were to simplify to Carib and historians were to write as the name of a whole tribe.

The Caraibes were the responsible people, they the ones who in all the tests of life had proven themselves more valiant, more enduring than their fellows. So when the time came when the towns were too crowded and food grew scarce, the Caraibes took it upon themselves to be the ones to emigrate from the land of their birth.

The weak and the poor were to be left behind. Neither their strength nor their intelligence made them fit for hard travelling. It was the duty of the aristocrats, the obligation of their caste, for them to be the ones to go.

So the Caraibes, leaving only a few of their numbers behind to rule, left their huts by the great rivers of the south and began the venture north. They took little with them, their bows, some arrows, axes of smoothed stone, their sleek canoes and only food enough for a few days journey. Their training had fitted them for hardship and no other people on the continent were so skilled in hunting. . . . At last, many weeks journey to the north, in a new, rich land by other waters,

where the forests were empty of man, they established a new home.

Generations passed, and since they were still strong, their numbers again increased and once more there were too many. The time had come again. The strong, inured to the tradition that their class was bred and destined for adventure, once more emigrated. . . . So it happened, the old chief told me, through countless centuries. Successive waves of Caribs reached the forking rivers that flow down to make the Amazon. Settlement after settlement grew into powerful towns. New regions were populated. Yet as the years went by the pressure always came again and repeated waves of emigration surged northward. At last they reached the sea, but the habit of conquest and perpetual movement was so strong that it offered no barrier. They built giant canoes that could hold a hundred fighting men, launched them from the swampy coasts of the continent and sped ever north.

One by one the West Indian islands fell to them, the weak soft people who had always lived on them were made subject, were absorbed or vanished. Sometimes, the old Carib of Guiana explained with an air of cold apology, the aboriginals of the West Indies were undoubtedly eaten. Succeeding centuries of hardship had driven the Caribs, since other meat was often unobtainable, to the habit of man-eating. I was given to understand that it was not a native custom but an acquired characteristic, regrettable only in that it had given a proud people a bad name among strangers.

Such were the inhabitants of the West Indies in those hours of gathering storm while the weaver's son of Genoa, portentous and sombre with his dreams, plied his suit at the court of

Isabella. The gentle Arawaks stock occupied the big islands from Puerto Rico north, the Caribs had already driven north as far as what are now the Virgin Islands. . . . "Driven" is a poor word for it. Far more likely the movement of the Caribs through the islands had been a drift, one of almost imperceptible slowness, swift only in one old man's proud imaginings of events a thousand years before him. But on both races, amiable and savage, the tempest was to break with equal violence. No hurricane that had ripped and howled around those long-quiet islands had ever equalled the onrushing force of men and change that was soon to be loosed on them.

. . . . . .

The competent brothers of the Pinzon family had put Columbus' scheme into brisk action. Two of the three ships that went on the first expedition, the *Santa Maria* and the *Nina* belonged to them and the *Pinta* was chartered. Two, the *Pinta* and *Nina,* were a type of vessel called *caravels,* tiny craft with absurdly high sterns and forecastles with a small well between. They were rigged forward with small square sails and the after-masts carried bellying canvas triangles caught at one edge to a yardarm and at the two lower points to the deck—a type of sail called *lateen* or Latin, because of its use in the Mediterranean. The *Santa Maria* was a trifle larger—though it was only ninety feet over all—and this Columbus took as his flagship, leaving its handling to a pilot recommended by the Pinzons. On the three ships together there were 120 men.

Whether it was a new Western world they sought or an old Eastern one—it is doubtful if they precisely knew them-

selves—the sailing plan was definite. Past the bulge of Africa they were to go southwest to the Canaries, then, near the 28th parallel of latitude, strike due west. Columbus, in his mystic, impressive fashion, proclaimed that the distance from there to wherever it was they were going was precisely 700 leagues—a favorite figure of the waterfront gossipers.

The three vessels put out of Palos harbor on the morning of August 3rd, 1492, at eight o'clock. With such ships and with so dim a destination it was an incomparable adventure. The bravery of Columbus is heightened and colored, not diminished, by his amazing unfitness for it. The Pinzons, skilled seamen, on their own vessels, with a map to guide them but no vision, stand in less glaring light. Without them Columbus might never have left port, or, somehow leaving it, almost certainly would have failed. But without Columbus, though the Pinzons might have explored half the Caribbean, there is strong likelihood no more would have come of it than of those mysterious previous expeditions. As merchants they might have kept their discovery secret, merely planning on some private profit from it. . . . The venture needed a salesman. And had it.

The trip over was almost without event. Once, it is true, on the *Santa Maria* the sailors grumbled at the weary length of the voyage, but Martin Pinzon drew alongside in the *Pinta* and gave them a dressing down, and from then on all was peace. Martin also shouted to the Grand Admiral of the Oceanic Sea that he and his brothers were having no trouble whatever on the *Nina* and *Pinta* and that all the Admiral had to do if he couldn't get on with his men was to signal and they'd come over and attend to it for him. . . . A more sensi-

tive man than Columbus might easily have been depressed. But the incident seems to have left his esteem for himself untarnished.

It was at Martin's suggestion that, after passing the seven hundred league mark and still sighting no land, the due-west course they were following was changed to southwest. Had they gone on as they were they would have come to the coast of middle Florida and Columbus would have discovered a continent. As it was he always managed to scale by both North and South America on all of his four voyages.

They were going slowly, watchfully now. Land, according to their computations, could not possibly be far off. Nor was it. At two o'clock on the morning of October 12th—just two days after the sailors aboard the *Santa Maria* had expressed their impatience, and seventy days after they left Spain—a lookout saw sand and surf in the moonlight and cried excited warning. A cannon was fired and the sails rattled down. Sleeplessly, with the three ships close together, they waited for the dawn.

It puzzles visitors to the West Indies that they are not shown where Columbus landed. It should be, from frequent repetition of its name, the most famous island in the tropic seas. There should be some monument to mark the place. . . . It is even more puzzling that no one really knows. But it is the Admiral's own fault.

From the course they followed it is clear that the first landfall was made somewhere among the Bahamas. Though the Bahaman islands are many, their number is, after all, not infinite. And Columbus' own description of the spot survives.

That is just the trouble. Christopher, as usual, was overselling:

"I had under my eyes an immense mountainous rock which completely surrounds that island. It forms a hollow and a port capable of holding all the fleets of Europe, but the entrance is very narrow. . . . There are gardens there, the most beautiful I have ever seen in my life and sweet water in profusion."

There would have been some point in discovering an island like that. One would have felt the trip was thoroughly worth while. . . . The only trouble is, there isn't any such place. Unless, within a very short time after he left it there was some geological catastrophe in which mountain, harbor, gardens, springs and all were swallowed, there never was any such place.

An islet at the eastern edge of the Bahaman archipelego (that glories in the pretty name of Watling's) is traditionally supposed to have been the spot so honored. Since Columbus named wherever-it-was San Salvador, San Salvador is often printed in brackets beside Watling's. The reason for the supposition is that Watling's has a greater altitude than most of the three thousand or so rocks, sandbars, islets and islands of the Bahaman group, rising, indeed, to the staggering elevation of 240 feet. There is no other evidence. Watling's is not surrounded by a reef, it is as unfertile as most of the Bahamas and as tough a place for gardening, and, like its neighbors, is almost devoid of fresh water.

Nevertheless, the identification may be correct. The squat bluff of Watling's, now almost never visited, might loom large after such a journey. . . . Though one wonders that a man brought up in sight of the Maritime Alps and a frequent

traveller through the rugged highlands of Portugal and Spain could ever—in the face of 240 feet of sand and coral—have hit upon the adjective "immense." If that was really it, the rest of the description must be set down to poetic enthusiasm—and disappointment.

They landed—bearded, puzzled, excited men, some of them barelegged and in torn rough shirts that showed their sunburned, hairy chests, some in helmets and shining breastplates of armor, the Discoverer himself in whatever garments of state his small wardrobe afforded—a wide-sleeved Venetian cloak, its dark dye faded by the sun, a soft velvet cap such as they wear in the Holbein portraits, a tunic to the knees embroidered with the cross. . . . Of so much we can be sure. The Admiral had had since two o'clock in the morning to dress for his great moment, and surely he had not slept. Probably, for once, the romantics who have painted the scene for us are not far wrong.

They landed in the little boats. They knelt. They prayed, keeping wary, timid eyes on the coarse overgrowth on the cliff's edge. "San Salvador" was inhabited and soon a few naked Indians plucked up courage to show themselves.

One, braver than the rest, came forward and the Admiral advanced to meet him.

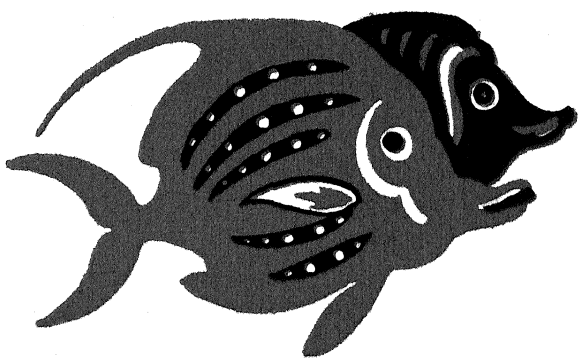
The high gods held their breaths. Here worlds were meeting, space and time were joined. . . . And then They laughed.

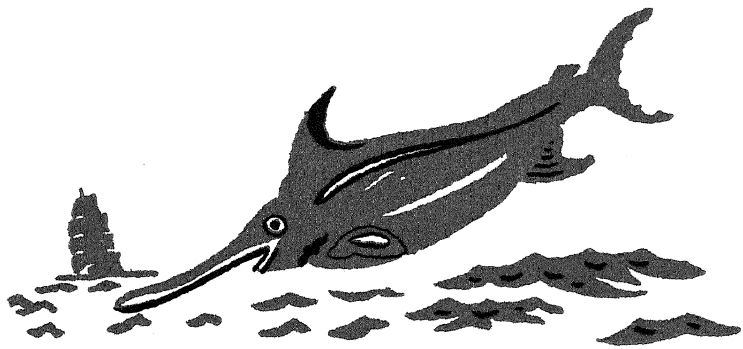
The Indian spoke. The soft, half-whispered syllables he uttered were *taino*. The word means "Peace."

In a report he wrote of them Columbus said: "So gentle and affectionate are they that I swear there is not a better people in the world."

There were not many of the Yucayo tribe on the Bahamas and the islands were so bare and poor that the Spaniards never made any attempt to settle them. But seventeen years later when labor already was growing scarce in the gold mines that were being worked in Haiti, the Yucayos were remembered and Spanish ships came back for them. The bright-garbed strangers had of course been taken for gods, so their authority was infinite. All that was necessary for them to do was to assure the Indians that they had come to transport them to the heavenly shores and most of them came willingly aboard. Though a few, it is true, had to be rounded up with bloodhounds. . . . In less than a generation those "gentle and affectionate" people were all dead, and for a century no sound but the seabirds' calling broke the silence of the islands.

Taino . . . Peace . . . had come.





II — *DISCORD*

THE three ships turned south, threading perilously through the shoals and reefs and islets that are now the Bahamas. Before long they came to the coast of Cuba.

The Admiral, as he had always promised, had discovered new land. By the time he had finished with the Bahamas, touched Cuba and gone on to Haiti, he had discovered a great deal of it. Yet now the records and journals that he was preparing to take home to his patrons paradoxically ceased all mention of new land. Cuba, he insisted, was Japan. He made a notary who was with him fill out a paper which he signed, swearing it was Japan. Later he decided it must be China and dispatched a Jewish scholar, who had come with the expedition as "interpreter," into the interior to deliver a letter to the Great Khan. . . . Or perhaps, on the other hand, this was India. . . .

The fact is, Columbus was disappointed. As a salesman he was frankly worried. He had promised—he had practically guaranteed—everything, and everything, to Spaniards, meant boundless wealth. Pure science did not interest them. And all he actually had found were sandbanks, coral, and two vast, mysterious mountain lands clothed with forest down to their shores. He had come upon a few docile natives of a racial type that was unfamiliar and had seen some bright plumaged birds and much rare botany. It was interesting, certainly. If it was indeed new territory he and his heirs might rule it, as the Queen had agreed. But if the truth was strictly held to there was small likelihood of his ruling anything but these few Indians and empty shores. Assurances that they had found the fabulous East would arouse more enthusiasm. . . . Possibly the Discoverer was confused. Or possibly not.

When they reached the north coast of Haiti, the *Santa Maria*, the best of the ships and the one the Admiral commanded, ran aground and could not be got off again. Fortunately the pleasant natives of Haiti wore a few crude ornaments of gold—a symptom, at least, of what the Spaniards had come to seek, and the Indian women were softly formed, smooth-skinned and lovely. So the prospect of being left behind was not too appalling. It was just as well, for the two smaller vessels could not safely carry the whole party.

The *Santa Maria* was dismantled and its lumber and iron used to build rough habitations ashore near an Indian village. Forty volunteers moved into them to await the time of Columbus' return. Meanwhile they would amuse themselves royally, find the source of those symptomatic gold baubles, and every

one of them would have fortunes in bullion to take home with him when the ships came by again.

The *Nina*, with Columbus aboard, reached Palos in the middle of March. They had been gone seven months. They had, as he had promised, found land beyond the endless sea. This time it was not to go unnoticed. There was to be no secrecy, no foolish notion of working the new islands as a private monopoly. . . . Europe, the whole wide world, was to know.

In actual, sober fact the discoveries of Columbus were of small importance. Land had been found, of course; some of it rich enough, but most of it either sandy and barren or mountainous and thickly forested. For any real, immediate use, the news the Admiral brought back, had he been plain-minded and strictly truthful, was of little more consequence to ordinary people than it is to us in the twentieth century to hear of a new range in Antarctica named after a gasoline.

The Spanish were not land-hungry. Few, in the whole history of Spain's dominance of the American tropics, ever made the trip westward with any mere humble plan of settling down and getting a living. The Spaniards had no desire whatever to colonize, then or later. Indeed it was because they did not that at long last they failed.

The Great Salesman's task had really just begun. He had sold himself, magnificently. Now he must sell those islands he had found. Again he was transcendently successful.

He made the adventure of exploration intensely alluring, as no one ever has before or since. It was not easy. The vast majority of people in all times and in all circumstances, when they hear of long voyaging, hardships and far places, listen with a sickly smile and withhold most of their attention. . . .

Exciting, of course. Well enough for those mad enough to like such things. But security and the known are pleasant, too.

Columbus' luck was in. The matter-of-fact Martin Pinzon in the *Pinta* had been blown out of sight of the *Nina* in a storm they had encountered in the neighborhood of the Canary Islands and had reached Palos three days late. Then, almost at once, Pinzon died. There was no one to share the Admiral's glory. No one to give a drab and too-literal account of what they had seen.

Columbus told no untruths. On no occasion of his life does one feel he consciously lied. He was a romantic. He believed, with a glowing and dramatic passion, in himself, in his own importance and therefore in the importance of all he did. Probably the two hundred and forty feet sand and coral precipice of Watling's island really had seemed to him immense and mountainous, the timid, naked Indians of Haiti really subjects of the Chinese Emperor. Columbus had the supreme, world-shaking gift of believing what he wished to believe, of believing it so firmly and with such freedom from any hint of doubt or humor that all who came in contact with him perforce had to believe him too.

The *Nina* landed at Palos, at the extreme southwestern corner of Spain. The Court, where Columbus was expected to make his report, was at Barcelona, at the extreme northeastern corner of Spain. This suited the returned hero perfectly. He paraded the whole way. By the time he had reached his royal employers there was scarcely a person in the kingdom who had not heard of him and of his great accomplishment; tens of thousands had actually seen him.

His sailors, sunburned and in battered armor, marched with

him. In their wake came seven sample Indians who had been brought along as living proofs. They carried, for all to see, some lengths of bamboo, a stuffed alligator, and forty live parrots.

Columbus—it is almost mystically significant in the person of our discoverer—understood the value of publicity. By the time he reached Barcelona he had not only established his own fame, but, subtly, had enhanced the fame of his sovereigns. *They* were the patrons of this extraordinary fellow. *They* had had the divine wisdom and foresight to back him and his enterprise. Their own shining eminence was given an extra polish because of him.

His success was complete.

Six months later when he sailed at the head of his second expedition he had seventeen ships, and fifteen hundred men accompanied him. The most gigantic adventure in the history of the world was fairly launched.

Within ten years every island in the West Indies—without important exceptions—had been visited. The exploring Cabots had touched the coast of North America, and Amerigo Vespucci—whose first name was to have a resounding immortality—had voyaged along the shore of South America. Within thirty years, Balboa had crossed the Isthmus and discovered the Pacific, the world had been circumnavigated, and Cortez had conquered Mexico.

One marvels that there were ships enough to carry them, or men to go. But the Middle Ages were just ending and except for the entertainment offered by the Crusades, Europe had been bored for a thousand years. Columbus' overstatements released the pent-up restlessness of centuries. Life in Europe

or in Spain, had not been eventless, certainly, but it had been circumscribed in space. Travel for a long time had been easy enough to make the Mediterranean world seem limited. The wandering, venturesome spirit of men, long lashed down, was released like a catapult.

Too, Europe was poor. Opportunities for growing rich were limited. Social classes were rigidly fixed and the chances for bettering one's position were negligible. And gold, literally, was scarce. No new sources of the metal had been discovered for centuries, existing quantities were diminishing and the meager supply on hand was growing each year more perilously inadequate to bear the burden of Europe's increasing trade.

The promise that initiated the huge westward wave of men was certainly gold. In all of Columbus' talk, now of opulent Asia, now of the new magic lands, there was always the near-promise that it could be gathered by the handfuls. The Conquistadors went for that. Each, in his heart, probably planned no more than a short journey, then a triumphant return and a life of ease at home forever after. Yet the fact that the infinite majority were disappointed—once the initial impulse had been given—did not deter them.

From the beginning there always was a little for the lucky ones, and when Cortez conquered Mexico and Pisarro, ten years later, reached Peru, the dream of incredible abundance almost came true. But the rest, who never found gold, found adventure. They found blue waters and the glory of the sun. They found a profusion of fair islands, each more beautiful than the last, each in some fashion different from the rest. They stood on clean sand shores where the surf was like the

foam of milk and the sea was the colors of lapis and of emerald. A wind blew round them like no wind that Europe knew. It was clear and new. Everything seemed possible.

. . . . . .

For most of the nineteenth century until their rediscovery by travellers began in recent years, the West Indies were in decline. During that period they gradually withdrew from public consciousness. So it is difficult now to realize how immensely they once loomed.

The West Indies, during the whole of the sixteenth century, were the center of European activity in the new world for a hundred years before there were settlements of any importance on either of the American continents. The Caribbean was the arena in which Spain won to her colossal eminence, where she was dogged by her enemies and at last dragged down. In the long West Indian conflict for power England learned much of her seamanship and there established her fortunes as an Empire. These now half-sleeping islands were long held to be the richest colonial possessions in the world. The British negotiators of the Treaty of Paris, as late as 1763, were severely criticized for allowing France to cede Canada when, if they had been firm, England might have secured Martinique instead. The loss of Haiti during Napoleon's First Consulate seemed a blow from which France could never recover. In Europe a "West Indian planter" was for generations a symbol of all that was most affluent.

The intrusion of other powers into the West Indian area began very early. Theoretically, Spain's monopoly was absolute. Though Columbus was born an Italian he had explored,

beyond any question, in the service of Spain. He had even changed his name to the Spanish form of Cristobal Colon. The only protest or question of the Spanish right had come from Portugal and that difference, in principle at least, had been settled by a Papal Bull soon after Columbus' return from his first voyage. The Portuguese had for some time been conducting explorations south along the coast of Africa and one navigator had reached as far as the Cape of Good Hope. The Portuguese objective was the same as that of Columbus, to find a seaway to Asia, but their plans had been directed eastward. The addled reports brought back by the *Pinta* and the *Nina* were disturbing.

Pope Alexander VI—the father of Cesare and Lucrezia Borgia—settled the matter with customary vigor. He drew a line down the earth from pole to pole a hundred leagues west of the Azores (later corrected to a line 370 leagues west) and proclaimed that henceforth—this was 1493—all territory not occupied by Christian princes east of that line should fall to Portugal, all west of it to Spain.

This splendid gesture seems to have filled even the parties to it with uneasiness. In the then state of knowledge no one—Alexander VI least of all, knew what it meant. Later investigation was to prove that Portugal had in fact been given Brazil—because it was found to bulge out past the line of partition, and Spain had been deprived of all rights in the Orient—that very Orient she thought she had just discovered! As to the other ambitious European powers who weren't in on it . . . their reply was an unequivocal and emphatic fifteenth century equivalent of "Nuts!"

So resolutely did England, France and Holland set out to

take Alexander's Bull by the horns that by the middle of the sixteenth century an agreement had been reached by Europe's diplomats—a curious, unofficial understanding that there should be: "*No peace beyond the line.*"

The "line" ran south from the Azores and west along the Tropic of Cancer. Beyond it was out of bounds. Whatever happened outside the Line should not be regarded as a cause of war in Europe. Spain protested, of course, and kept on protesting, but in practice she accepted it. They had given her warning. She would have to fight for her life against every private and official adventurer of an envious world. Very well. So be it.

She was not helpful. It has never been the Spanish habit to compromise, nor did Spain ever display much administrative wisdom. She insisted upon absolute monopoly.

This meant that no ships of any other nation might enter new world waters, that no goods from any other country could be sold in the new colonies, that none of the produce of the West Indies could be carried to Europe on any but the vessels of Spain.

It was a clear invitation to piracy—an invitation that was warmly accepted. Spain had comparatively few vessels to meet the needs of the immense new traffic, and those few were grossly overworked. Too, they had a tendency to flock to whatever new place was the fashion and excitement of the moment, first Haiti and Cuba, then Mexico, then the settlements along the Main.* Finally, when Pisarro had begun his

* "The Spanish Main" has been variously interpreted. It meant, actually, simply the northern coast of the South American continent—the Spanish *mainland.*

looting of Peru, very few ships were sent anywhere except to the ports of Panama. The result of this was that the colonists who had settled in less profitable places were left stranded. For long periods they received no fresh supplies—so that sometimes they were in danger of extinction; for still longer periods they could find no space on homebound ships for what they had to sell; and, worst of all, they could secure no transport to take them away from the backwaters where fate had set them, to join the rush of the more fortunate—to Mexico, to Peru . . . to whatever place it might be just a little farther on where one could fill one's pouch with gold in double handfuls, then go swaggering back to Spain.

The first recorded English intruder reached the Spanish town of Santo Domingo, on the island of Haiti, as early as 1527. They arrived with dry goods. They departed, amidst cannon fire, in a general atmosphere of larceny. But the ship at first had been received cordially, both by officials and colonials. She was a smuggler and as a smuggler she was welcome.

The form of smuggling that soon became most widely popular was slave-running. The importation to the islands of blacks from Africa had begun a very few years after the discovery.

It is surprising that they were necessary. There were Indians on all the islands. One has the impression from the hazy records that some of the larger ones were quite densely populated and in the earliest days the explorers were forever exclaiming at how the "affectionate" aborigines delighted to work for them. However, their delight soon waned, gave way indeed, to marked distaste.

An early writer on the islands speaks of them with melancholic disapproval: "They are a barbarous sort of people, hating all manner of labor and only inclined to run from place to place. . . . Perceiving the dominion of the Spaniards laid a great restriction upon their lazy customs, they conceived an incredible odium against them such as never was to be reconciled. More especially" (he adds in a burst of fairness) "because they saw them take possession of their kingdoms and dominions. Hereupon they made against them all the resistance they were capable of . . . until the Spaniards, finding themselves cruelly hated by those Indians, resolved to extirpate and ruin them every one. The conquerors made use of dogs to range and search the intricatest thickets of the forests for those their implacable enemies. . . . They conceived such horror of the Spaniards that they resolved to detest and fly their sight forever. Hence the greatest part died in caves and subterraneous places of the woods and mountains."

The somewhat indistinguishable wild dogs and Spaniards, whatever their technique, were amazingly effective. Before long there were few Indians and soon, on the larger islands, there were none. None at all. It is almost incredible. Yet it is truth. The priest Las Casas, one of the few critics of the butchery, once published the estimate that his fellow-countrymen had succeeded in murdering fifteen million Indians. He exaggerated, of course. They couldn't possibly have found time for it.

But one can see why they needed Africans. The meager gold mines of the islands were already running dry and a number of colonists had turned with a sigh from gold hunting to the more profitable, but less exciting, trades of tobacco and

sugar planting. The black slaves worked better in the sun, and evidently were treated better, for it was calculated that an average healthy male slave might be expected to have ten years' usefulness before he died. As time went on prices rose, and work, once the forests were cleared, became less onerous; the average span increased, so that in the end Negroes sometimes lived the whole of their normal lives through and bore children to labor after them.

In 1517 the Spanish government authorized an importation of four thousand Guinea coast slaves annually. This trade, like others, was to be a Spanish monopoly. And, like others, the Spanish proved inadequate to it. The deliveries were slow, the numbers they brought were insufficient for the planters' needs, and ships, cargo and purchasers were all required to entangle themselves irritatingly in colonial, customs and royal regulations—with resulting taxes.

The famous John Hawkins was one of the first of the contraband slave runners. During the 1560's he made several voyages, combining wine, cloth and general merchandise with the main cargo of manacled blacks that he had picked up from traders in West Africa. He made money out of it and others followed him.

It was a bootleg trade, stimulated by the Spanish prohibition of it. Like all extremely profitable trades outside the law, and many within it, it attracted men of a violent and hearty type. They grew callous to human pain and they held life cheaply—their own no dearer than others. And from a kind of merely illegal but still honest trading others drifted into hi-jacking. Let the Spaniards and the more virtuous traders make the long trip to Africa. They could be intercepted and

their cargoes stolen when the tedious journey was nearly done. One was outside the law in either case, the stain of white men's blood upon one's hands scarcely showed when the hands were so red already with the blood of blacks.

Men of all nations drifted to the islands. A few were rich and titled. They came with swaggering laughter and with gleaming, ready swords. They found peril, strangeness and beauty—all they had come for. Far more were poor and outcast. They came, chiefly, for freedom. They were criminals many of them—though the crimes for which they were outlawed were often inconceivably petty. But the worlds they had been born to had cast them out and so they hated them.

Many squatter settlements came into existence. Tropical America was too vast a domain for Spain to hope to patrol. If little bands of foreign colonists stayed clear of the existing Spanish towns they could chose almost any site they wished without fear of being molested.

The most famous of these squatter colonies developed on the small island of Tortuga, off the north coast of Haiti.

The first comers to Tortuga were French. They were plain men and they came for land, not gold. The myth of easy treasure to be gathered had dimmed, and had been replaced by the lesser but more real promise of livings that might be got from growing sugar and tobacco. Since sugar planting required many acres and slaves to work them, the Frenchmen of Tortuga confined themselves to tobacco. With infinite, sweating labor they cut down the forest, burned away as much of the litter as they could and then grubbed up the stubborn roots. They had no supplies, few tools, and no servants. It was a life of incomparable hardship, yet with French doggedness

they persisted. By the middle of the sixteenth century more than two thousand of them were living on Tortuga and on the neighboring mainland of Haiti.

The most difficult problem was getting food enough to live on while the tobacco grew. Beans were always planted first, for a crop came into bearing in six weeks, then potatoes, then that most common root plant of the tropics, manioc—or cassava. And that, except for an occasional wild bird, was substantially all. It was a diet of unbearable monotony.

A new profession came into being.

In the earliest years of the Discovery the Spaniards had had the foresight to bring cattle, horses and pigs with them. Many beasts had escaped into the forests of the great island of Haiti and had there bred prodigiously. The high mountains made ideal range ground and they had reverted to a state of primeval wildness. But with the extermination of the Indians the last trails had disappeared and hunting them was a task of extraordinary difficulty.

Those who were skilled and found some reward of sport in the adventure gave up their attempts to farm and undertook to supply the rest with meat. They had a code and a fixed procedure. Two friends would bind themselves into a partnership—preferably, if the paper and penmanship could be found for it, in writing. Their possessions were pooled and it was agreed that subsequent profits should be precisely halved. In the event of the death of one of them—unless, as was unlikely, the deceased might be a family man—the other should be his heir. Under this solemn compact the two hunters set forth.

Typically, they were bearded and naked to the waist. They wore coarse linen pantaloons, usually stiff and black from the

blood of animals. They made their own boots of pigskin. They carried long-barrelled firelock rifles and a pouch of one ounce lead balls. Sharp, long knives were stuck in their rawhide belts. No bolder, harder men have ever lived. They—literally—were the buccaneers.

The pair of huntsmen did not go into the Haitian forests for a mere day's outing. They were often absent in the forest two years, never less than one year. Obviously their clients could not expect fresh meat. So the cattle they killed was smoke-dried over slow fires. The camps where the meat was smoked were called *boucans*, those whose profession it was, *boucaniers*. Boucan meant, literally, a smokehouse.

It is comforting, when one grows dolorous about our modern world, to come upon figures such as those *boucaniers*. What a crushing burden the life of the poor and outcast must have been in Europe to send men into a trade like that. Haiti is steeply mountainous. One of Napoleon's generals once described it by angrily crushing a paper in his hands and tossing the crumpled wad on a table. Its lowlands are hot, its summits and high shoulders often penetratingly cold. Then it was pathless, covered, depending on the terrain, with tangled jungle through which each step had to be forced, with giant cactus, or with scrub that was tough as rawhide. From the time they left the miserable settlements by the coast until they returned the hunters would encounter no one, sleep under no roof other than whatever shelter of branches they might pile over themselves, and eat nothing except what they could kill or find. The wild cattle were swift and timorous. Lead balls were scarce, and no shot could be wasted. So their game had to be tracked for days on end, then ambushed at

short range. Few occupations in history have ever called for such brute strength, or for men who asked of life so little.

What their historian * reports of them is hardly surprising: "After the hunt is over and the spoil divided among them they commonly sail to the isle of Tortuga, there to provide themselves with guns, powder, bullets and small shot, with all other necessaries against another going out or hunting. The rest of their gains they spend with great liberality, giving themselves freely to all manner of vices and debauchery, among which the first is that of drunkenness, which they exercise for the most part with brandy; † this they drink as liberally as the Spaniards do clear fountain water. Sometimes they buy together a pipe § of wine: this they stave at the one end and never cease drinking till they have made an end of it. . . . Neither do they forget at the same time the goddess Venus, for whose beastly delights they find more women than they can make use of. For all the tavern-keepers and strumpets wait for the coming of these lewd Buccaneers."

The Tortuga squatter colony was coming on apace. It had taverns, wine and strumpets.

It was quite natural for a *boucanier* to turn to the gentler life of piracy. As the Tortuga settlement had grown, more and more ships had put in there to sell cargoes of necessaries from Europe. Eventually it occurred to someone that paying cash, when ships, cargo and all could be had gratis, was an unnecessary extravagance. . . . In many instances, as the homeward bound Spanish galleons grew ever heavier with

* John Esquemeling: "The Buccaneers of America."

† Speculation and demand, reports Esquemeling, drove the price of Tortuga brandy up as high as $4.00 a gallon.

§ The dictionary gives a "pipe" as 126 gallons. Obviously a lie!

the gold of Mexico and the silver of Peru and piracy grew steadily more attractive, the captains and crews of the pirated vessels entered into the spirit of the thing with good will, and joined up.

The ship frequently belonged to some mere corporation in London, Amsterdam or La Rochelle and the men aboard her were neither overpaid nor too well fed. Europe, if it had given a man no better life than that of a common sailor, held no irresistible attraction. To join the leathery ruffians of Tortuga promised at least a run for one's money, a smear of violent color in the long greatness before death.

They called themselves the Brethren of the Coast and they were immensely earnest about it. Piracy was a coöperative, almost a communal effort. The profession was highly ethical.

"Before the Pirates go out to sea they give notice unto everyone that goes upon the voyage, of the day on which they ought precisely to embark, intimating also unto them their obligation of bringing each man in particular so many pounds of powder and bullets as they think necessary for that expedition. Being all come on board, they join together in council, concerning what place they ought first to go unto to get provisions—especially of flesh, seeing they eat scarce anything else. Of this the most common sort among them is pork. Sometimes they resolve to rob such or such hog-yards wherein the Spaniards often have a thousand head of swine together. They come unto these places in the dark of the night. . . .

"Having gotten provisions of flesh sufficient for their voyage they return unto their ship. Here their allowance, twice a day to everyone, is as much as he can eat, without either

weight or measure. Neither does the steward give any greater proportion of flesh, or anything else, unto the Captain than unto the meanest mariner. The ship being well victualled, they call another council, to deliberate towards what place they shall go to seek their desperate fortunes. In this council likewise they agree upon certain articles, which are put in writing, by way of bond or obligation, which everyone is bound to observe and all of them to set their hands unto. Herein they set down very distinctly what sums of money each particular person ought to have for that voyage, the fund of all the payments being the common stock of what is gotten by the whole expedition; for it is the law among these pirates—'*No prey, no pay!*'

"In the first place, therefore, they mention how much the Captain ought to have for his ship. Next, the salary of the carpenter who mended and rigged the vessel. This commonly amounts to 100 or 150 pieces-of-eight.* Afterwards for provisioning they draw out of the same common stock about 200 pieces-of-eight. Also a competent salary for the surgeon and his chest of medicaments. Lastly they stipulate what recompense or reward each one ought to have that is either wounded or maimed in his body. They order that for the right arm 600 pieces-of-eight, or six slaves; for the loss of a left arm 500 pieces-of-eight, or five slaves; for a right leg the same; for a left leg 400 pieces-of-eight or four slaves; for an eye 100 pieces-of-eight, or one slave; for a finger of the hand the same reward as for the eye. All of which sums of money are

* A "piece-of-eight" was a Spanish piaster, worth about one American dollar.

taken out of the capital sum or stock of what is gotten by their piracy.

"A very exact and equal dividend is made of the remainder among them all. Herein they have also regard unto qualities and places. Thus the Captain is allotted five or six portions to what the ordinary seamen have; the Master's Mate only two. After him they draw equal parts, even to the lowest mariner, the boys not being omitted. For even these draw half a share, by reason that, when they happen to take a better vessel than their own, it is the duty of the boys to set fire unto the ship wherein they are, and then retire unto the prize which they have taken.

"They observe among themselves very good order. For in the prize they take it is severely prohibited unto every one to usurp anything in particular unto themselves. Hence all they take is equally divided. Yea, they make a solemn oath to each other not to abscond, or conceal the least thing they find amongst the prey. If any one is found unfaithful immediately he is separated and turned out of the society. . . . Among themselves they are very civil and charitable to each other. Insomuch that if any wants what another has, with great liberality they give it one to another. . . ."

The outlines emerge of a not unattractive way of life. There is a note somewhere there that touches one, a hint of wistfulness. These Brothers of the Coast were grown men, tough, the most dangerous ruffians of sea or earth. . . . Now that they are pirates they can have enough to eat—"without either weight or measure"! Ratty, thieving children from the slums of European cities that they had been, swift, half-naked

little beasts who picked their livings from the refuse heaps; then, most of them, sailors, in a time when a sailor could not afford to pick the maggots from his rotten meat or else he'd starve. . . . Now that they were pirates, cast out by God and man, they at last could have enough to eat!

And some provision was made for them if they were hurt. Five hundred dollars for a leg! A hundred for an eye! No one had ever shown that much care for any one of them before. When you were smashed in those days you were thrown out. You were lucky if you weren't cursed for your clumsiness.

The organization of the buccaneer pack should provide some sociologist with the material for his thesis. The Brotherhood of the Caribbee Pirates was the first professional organization in the new world, one of the first completely democratic ones in history. No ships ever before had been run by Captains elected by their crews, and none, from the point of view of discipline, was ever run better. But a pack of wolves they were, bloody, ruthless and terrible.

They ranged, as men will in any trade, from best to worst. But the best were bad and the worst abysmally vile. John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake were pirates, but they were "harrying" an enemy and their piracy was pleasing to their Queen. Henry Morgan, though he was as foul a villain as ever died in bed, was after all knighted. But Francois l'Ollonais cut a prisoner's heart out with his cutlass, then made a fair pretence of eating it, and the Dutchman Roche Brasiliano so disliked all Spaniards that he roasted them alive on wooden spits. The fact that they were "civil" to each other helps, but it is not enough. . . .

There is a theory that no society can develop without criminals, because criminals are the changers—that, since no civilization is possible without change, the law breaker fosters the development of social order. If all men were obedient to all laws, if all traditions were docilely accepted, nothing would alter and we still should be grubbing for roots and shivering in draughty caves.

The Buccaneers perhaps gave the new world its vitality, set it spinning on its course.

From the first Spanish concept was impossible. Because of their travelling salesman and the rambling, wonderful tales he told, they claimed a hemisphere. It was their huge and comfortable scheme to take of it what they wished, to use a great archipelago of islands and two continents for the enrichment of a single European state; with a dog-in-the-manger snarl to bar all others from so much as a mouthful. No islet was so small or so neglected by them that the Spaniards did not try to forbid it from use by anyone else.

Statesmen and merchants conceivably for a time might have accepted this pretension: at least traded it for some concession at Gibraltar, or a lower salt tax at Cadiz. But the outcast poor would have none of it. A new world called for new chances and new changes. The Don in his golden splendor made good sport. Let him do the troublesome looting. He would find the wolves of the world baying round his path when he tried to carry the loot home. The invitation was irresistible. Had the claimant of half the earth labored merely to settle it, to form colonies where men might live and work, had they been patient and sought a slower wealth, the prize might not have seemed so alluring—or so portable—and Eng-

land, France and Holland might perhaps have not snatched so hungrily. Some time at least might have been given Spain to make her claim good.

Then the West Indies would have been incomparably less interesting.

As it is, within sail, and often within sight, of each other are the colonies and cultures of more nations than one may find empire-building so close together anywhere else on earth. In Africa and the Pacific most colonies are vast and they stand at stately distances from each other. But in the Caribbean, France, England, Holland, the United States and Denmark weren't empire-building, they were empire-nibbling. Their purpose of each one carrying off a brick or two from the crumbling Spanish edifice, brought them, whether they liked it or not, companionably together. There they sit, now, centuries after, mongrels of most various breeds, but now old dogs all of them, most tame and amiable, remaining in a ring outside the great and long empty encampment from mere force of habit.

It is immensely convenient for travellers. Nowhere else is so much variety so accessible.

III — *CUBA*

SPAIN kept Cuba longest. For 405 years the wolves did no more than lightly rip its flanks. Each time they were quickly shaken off and the wounds soon healed. In many respects Cuba was the most conscientious, thorough venture at honest colonization in the whole of Spain's history as an empire. The result of four long and patient centuries was to make Cuba not Spanish, but almost hysterically Cuban. It was the ultimate failure.

There is no accounting, of course, for one's children, and colonial children are the most unaccountable of all. They

learn the maternal language, accept the family traditions, and pick up most of the paternal bad habits. Then, by some strange alchemy, they develop identities that are quite unrecognizable. The United States did it and England has never understood, and never, in her heart, quite forgiven them. Cuba, with a far longer period spent in the family circle and a far shorter one outside of it, is more surprising. Cuba is intensely nationalistic, clamorously free. . . . Sometimes one detects that note of slightly too-noisy jubilation with which the just-past-adolescent greets the independence of a first Greenwich Village apartment. . . . It is an amiable failing. It is one's own fault really, that another's patriotism is apt to be a little tiring.

The Cubans are hugely proud of their island. There is a quantity of it to be proud of. From a distant perspective it seems—well, an island. A big one, of course, but not peculiarly distinguished from the general string of the West Indies. In reality Cuba is the largest of them all, and it isn't an island; it is something like thirteen hundred * of them.

The distance from one end of Cuba to the other is as great as from Florida to New York, it has forty-odd thousand square miles of area, and, unless something unexpected occurs to lessen the natural energies of its population, there will soon be four million people living on it.

Cuba is long and of variable widths. Its outline looks just enough like something else to have troubled geographers for years. Cuba's shape has been discovered to resemble a crocodile, a hammer-head shark, a bird's tongue. Personally I have

* The other 1299 speckle the sea off shore and range in size from the big Isle of Pines to mere footholds for a seagull. Two of the groups are called, pleasantly, the Gardens of the King and the Gardens of the Queen.

never noticed the similarity between a bird's tongue and a crocodile or the likeness of either one to Cuba. A map of Cuba looks like Cuba. That should be enough. The Cubans are themselves conscious of its shape to the extent of referring to the "lower turn"—*Vuelta Abajo*—west of Havana and the "upper turn"—*Vuelta Arriba*—to the east. The western turn is the classic tobacco country, where the vintage leaves of the world are grown.

Few places are more visited than Cuba or less seen. Every day during the season—and the season lengthens as people discover that the tropics in summer need not be formidable—big planes fly down daily from Florida, ships ply back and forth as busily as ferry-boats, cruise steamers fetch loads of one-day sightseers. But nearly all go to Havana and stay in Havana. A certain number of tourists, it is generally believed, have not even seen Havana, at least, not by daylight. . . . Since time and life are limited, and since Havana has something definite to offer and delivers it promptly, the procedure is not unreasonable.

Cuba is populous and agricultural. Though that does not make the Cuban country less beautiful, it does perhaps make it occasionally monotonous.

The Western end of the island is fairly high—if there were a word somewhere between hilly and mountainous, this would be the place for it. Tobacco is a highland crop and western Cuba is, par excellence, the tobacco country. Cultivation is as careful, as precious, as vine culture in Burgundy. Certain slopes, certain single acres produce tobacco leaves for which the market clamors to pay several dollars a pound. Apparently identical acres in the same district produce run-of-the-mill

weed that tastes like a tonsil operation. No one knows quite why. It is all rather mysterious, one of those connoisseur crafts that happily still survive in a mass production world. . . . It is an attractive country. The sun of the Cuban uplands has an edged and vivid splendor, there is always something pleasant about a landscape that is working for its living. The tobacco fields, pale green and rust-red, run often to the summits of the hills and sometimes over them. The crop at certain seasons is veiled from the vigor of the sun with immense sheets of white gauze cloth.

The central portion of the island is lower, a region of great sloping plains. This is the territory that supplies nearly a quarter of the world's supply of sugar, in the neighborhood of two million tons of it a year. The fields of cane stretch to infinite horizons. Grey-violet plumes of sugar in flower nod with a drowsy beauty above mature cane so tall a man on horseback may be concealed by it. Next to it will be a brown field that has just been cropped and in the next a platoon of sweating peons—negroes, most of them—advances slowly against the green and solid wall, cutting out the cane with heavy cutlasses, stripping its leaves and throwing it methodically behind them. Cane cutting approaches being the hardest work in the world. Cane is tough, a cane-field cuts off all possibility of a breeze, the sun in the cutting season is hammering hot. . . .

The fields, the roads, the whole of the sugar country is criss-crossed by the tracks of plantation railroads hauling cane into the *Centrals* where it is crushed, boiled and evaporated into coarse crystals. The atmosphere is industrial. Everything seems upon a giant, impersonal scale.

Down toward the eastern end Cuba rises into high mountain ranges. Some of them are covered with forest and good timber is cut from them, but for the most part they are scarred, bare, carved by wind and rain and the cracking sun of ages into harsh, contorted shapes. From the air, from which almost any landscape is exciting, eastern Cuba is profoundly impressive. It is a peculiarity of earth that the more uninhabitable it is the better show it often makes of itself from the sky. The dominant color of the Cuban hills is a rusty tan; each sinuous hard shoulder is edged in black. The cold precision of the shadows, the look of sterility and lifelessness give the effect —from a mile or so aloft—of a landscape of another planet, of a silent and exhausted universe.

One excellent reason in past years why travellers in Cuba did so little travelling was the state of the roads. They were many, and terrible. When it was dry one ate dust, blew it visibly out of one's nostrils like a dragon in a fairy tale. When it was wet cars, carts, burros and pedestrians together bogged and wallowed in a slithery ooze. But now Cuba possesses one of the earth's most spectacular highways. It is well-nigh impossible to spend five minutes in a Cuban's company without hearing of it. It was built some years ago during the administration of President Machado. His fellow-countrymen have been gunning for him ever since, but the road they have taken to their hearts.

It is 706 miles long. It begins at a town called Pinar del Rio in the western end of the island and runs with crow's-flight directness straight down the middle of the Republic to the city of Santiago at the other end. It cost, what with a bit of political leakage here and there, $100,000,000. It is not difficult,

however, to understand why. Cuba owes its fertility, its nearly uniform lush greenness, to innumerable creeks and small rivers. The Central Road bridges literally hundreds of them. And crossroads are lifted over or tunnelled under. When a Latin drives a car the only limit to his impatience or his acceleration is the floor board or death. On Cuba's Central Highway he can magnificently express himself. It is a road almost without a turning or intersection.

More than two thousand buses, many of them sleekly, comfortably modern, use it and with a very few dollars and some enterprise nowadays one can see all of Cuba one could wish. Travellers are permitted to bring their own cars in duty free for six months.

. . . . . .

. . . One is sympathetic to Columbus' confusion. Confronted by anything so vast as Cuba it is no wonder he thought it everything but what it is.

After he had reluctantly given up the claim that he had come upon Japan, Columbus was even more than commonly at sea. "This place the natives call Cuba," on a second try, he placed somewhere off the coast of China. "This I know," he wrote, "because the sea comes here in a different manner from what it has done until now. . . ."

Indeed it did. The Discoverer had met that most famous of all ocean currents, the Gulf Stream.* Cuba is separated from

* A brief dissertation on the Gulf Stream might not be amiss. . . . We always speak of it so intimately. . . . Due to the globe's rotation to the east the ocean currents of the northern hemisphere are drawn generally west. Two factors then make these westerly currents veer southward: first, the centrifugal force of the whirling sphere has a tendency to draw all moving masses toward the equator: second, the cooler, denser waters of

the keys—the string of sand islets—at the tip of Florida by the hundred miles of the Florida Straits, and through the Straits, definitely measurable, flows the Stream, a warm sea river thirty-seven miles wide and quarter of a mile deep, with a current swifter than that of many great rivers of the continents . . . it surely "comes in a different manner." But still the Admiral's thinking that this proved nearness to Cathay is puzzling.

The three little ships bobbed in the Gulf Stream for a little, then beat back to Haiti.

Within a short time plans were made to settle Cuba. Columbus had called again, on both his second and third voyages, and, obstinately refusing to accept the inhabitants' name for their own islands, had indulged in an orgy of baptisms. First he had called Cuba *Juana*, then *Fernandina*, then *Santiago*, and finally, almost with a cry of despair, *Ave Maria!* No one paid the least attention to him. The name of the island continued to be Cuba.

In 1511 a leader named Diego Velasquez came from the Spanish headquarters at Santo Domingo, on the south coast of Haiti. He brought three hundred men with him and in rapid succession established half a dozen settlements along the south coast of the island. His mission was that of conquest. But the aboriginal Indians (the Ciboneys, who survive now only as the

northern seas are drawn southward to replace the immense losses from evaporation that occur in equatorial seas due to the great warmth of the tropical sun. Thus is created the Equatorial Current, a part of which, in the western hemisphere, sweeping westward across the middle Atlantic, pours through the more southerly West Indian islands and along the northern coast of South America. At Panama, meeting the obstruction of the coast of Central America it follows the curve of the continent northward, gaining, in the relatively confining space, ever increasing velocity—to debouch through the Florida Straits into the Atlantic again, to flow north and warm Bermuda, diffusing, widening, making England tepid.

name of a rum) were as "gentle and affectionate" as the Bahamans, so his task was easy. By the middle of the century they were practically exterminated.

Within six years of Velasquez' arrival the shortage of Indian laborers was already, in fact, so acute that a party was sent westward by sea to search for more. Thus was the mainland of Central America discovered. . . . Hernando Cortez was in the suite of Velasquez and it was from Cuba that he sailed with his handful of immortals to the conquest of Mexico. Velasquez had sent him; then, worried that he had done an underling too much honor, revoked Cortez' commission. But Cortez ignored the revocation and went his way, and the Conqueror of Cuba, it is recorded, when he discovered what a pot-at-the-end-of-the-rainbow he had missed, died of pure rage.

Havana was settled in 1519 and promptly became the center of the colony. Today it is the greatest city of the Caribbees. The venerable and the ultra-modern lie side by side.

Properly speaking, the name of the city is San Cristobal de la Habana. But the harbor—the Havana itself—was so important, so wholly the focus of the city's existence, that the rest of the name fell into disuse.

It is one of the best ports of the world. It is bottle-necked, deep enough for even the biggest ships, and surrounded on all sides by rising land. So narrow is the entrance that the surface of the inner bay has almost the stillness of a lake. . . . As a matter of fact this characteristic was for centuries by no means an unmixed blessing. The sewage and refuse of the city were naturally deposited in the handiest place—the harbor. Visiting ships added their bit. And there, because of that neat, almost one-way harbor entrance, it all stayed—fermenting. Light-

houses and charts were scarcely necessary. An experienced mariner could find Havana, if the wind was right, with his eyes closed. It was unmistakable. . . . Some shipmasters in the past paid Havana the ultimate insult. They insisted upon tying up to permanent buoys because they wouldn't drop their anchors. The waters of Havana harbor, they said, made their anchors all nasty! It does seem the extremity of niceness.

Now, however, all is changed. Unpleasantness is routed elsewhere and the waters shimmer sweetly in the sun.

The approach to the port is of course famous. The way in is as straight and narrow as a canal. On the left, rigid and forceful as a mailed fist, is the jutting promontory of *El Morro*.

Trouble came to Havana long before prosperity. The city was twice sacked by French raiders, in 1538 and 1554, and from the first the buccaneers preyed upon it, usually with marked success. Morro Castle was built in the eleven years following 1589 with the hope of lessening the annoyance. One has but to look at it to know that it helped materially. As much of it as ingenious architecture could devise is the native rock of the point. It is partly hewn from the promontory ("*Morro*" means simply promontory, or knoll—that is why several forts in the West Indies apparently have the same name) and partly constructed of great stone blocks quarried nearby. The landward approach to it is up an inclined moat, seventy feet deep, which, in classic mediaeval style, is spanned by a drawbridge. Unfortunately for Morro Castle's reputation, it was taken during the only serious attack ever made upon it. In 1762 while a large Spanish fleet timidly lurked inside the bay, troops were landed from English vessels, in some fashion breached the walls and entered Morro's fastnesses.

Beyond Morro, still on the left of the narrow way into the bay, stands evidence of the disgrace. The attack and surrender had been an incident of the Seven Years' War. In the next year, when peace had been signed, the citizens of Havana undertook the creation of a more formidable protector. Their reliance seems to have been upon sheer size—for the later fortress, the *Cabañas*, as it is called, is one of the truly great stone-piles of the world. It is a full mile in length and a fifth of a mile wide, a maze of gun emplacements, lookouts and barrack-rooms for many regiments.

Unfortunately—or fortunately—the Cabañas was never put to any severe test. Its chief use was during those long years of the nineteenth century when the Cubans, in various abortive ways, sought independence.

The firing squad was Spain's monotonous reply to all efforts for Cuban freedom. There is a wall inside the Cabañas fortress that is pocked for thirty yards with the executioners' bullets. By it, preserved with a kind of proud anger, is a ditch—the Laurel Ditch. The revolutionists were executed at its edge, with a fine stage manager's effect, toppled backward into it and out of sight. . . . Launches carry tourists across the narrow harbor neck to both great forts.

Past the fortifications the harbor opens and the real magnitude of the city of Havana becomes evident. It stretches away over the slopes in all directions. And from even the tallest ship one hasn't seen half of it.

Havana is rather baffling. It can't be walked over. Its distances are appalling and the places one is apt to want to see do not conveniently cluster round a center as they sometimes do

in European cities. Fortunately—for once—the business of seeing Havana is "organized."

Many voyagers, especially the very experienced and the totally inexperienced, have a tendency to shudder at the suggestion of a "planned tour." Often indeed they are ghastly. To go zooming through Paris, for example, savoring no more of St. Germain or the stern view of Notre Dame than can be glimpsed by twisting one's head around while the bus goes past, is merely a very bad substitute for staying home. That is because Paris is—well, very special.

Havana, with all kindness, isn't. It is an interesting city, striking, vigorous. It has an atmosphere, a flavor, and those who know it best grow immensely fond of it. It is merely that, stone for stone, monument for monument, Havana need not be scrutinized. One can't do better than zip round it in an open car and so take preliminary bearings. Having thus oriented yourself you can do as you like. You can return to places or neighborhoods for further inspection, you can take most of your clothes off and spend the rest of your time on the beach, or you can go straight home.

During the administration of that same President Machado under whom the great Central road was built, Cuba constructed her National Capitol. There had been talk of it ever since the foundation of the Republic. Enthusiasts had dreamed of a "Million-Dollar Capitol." But that was an obvious phrase, not necessarily to be taken seriously. Finally they got round to it—and it cost $18,000,000.

It is an altogether amazing building. No anticipation of tired feet or recollection of past disappointments should deter one from it. The Capitol stands superbly in the middle of the

newer city, with parks around it. It is "Latin-American" in but one particular—that perhaps it is too splendid. It could house the state and dignity of any nation of the world. But Cuba is a proud country and rich and in her Capitol she has done surpassingly well.

It is the only elaborately ornate public building that I ever recall having seen that never once errs in taste. There is a giant gold statue in the center of one of the most colossal halls on earth. Yet it is dignified, successful. A seventy-carat diamond, bought by the contributions of the workmen who constructed the building, is set in the marble floor. Somehow it succeeds in not being vulgar. There is a Legislative Chamber with finely done *gouache* panels and a Senate Chamber of just the proper dignity. Walls are panelled with marbles of all shades, certain rooms are painted with formal Italian Renaissance decorations, hangings are superbly rich, high-ceiled libraries are executed with a dark and formal elegance. The National Capitol is altogether a remarkable and beautiful production.

One emerges to regard the passing Cuban throng with new respect—and a certain wonder.

They are not, in truth, particularly prepossessing. The young women of Cuba—a vague-minded visitor comes away with an impression they are all the same age—are often of the thin, rather colorless brunette type that one associates with the less amusing quarters of Paris—like the shoppers round the Chatelet; or the colorless crowds on the Grande Rue de Pera in Istanbul. The resemblance probably lies no deeper than in the almost universal wearing of black, that dismal peculiarity of the lower middle classes of Roman Catholic countries.

The young men of Havana, on the other hand, dress with

a free and lurid style. (Not *all* young men, of course. Surely one can generalize. Generalities are so relaxing.) The Cuban bloods are the salesman's dream. Whatever has failed to catch on in the Open-in-the-Evening stores on upper Times Square is sure of success in Havana. The Havana youths like bell-bottom trousers with embroidered slits in them, lavender shirts with attached silk tassels instead of ties, suitings of loud patterns that still more loudly proclaim they didn't cost enough, pants with high waist bands and complicated buckles, short-sleeved shirts with zippers.

Cubans—except for the hearty black ones—don't look as if they ate enough. Of some this is indeed true and the reproach surely is not theirs. But thinness, quite apart from income, meagerness of hips and a sharpness in the shoulders seem almost a national characteristic.

That Cuba is more impressive than the Cubans merely serves as a reminder that the comprehension of another country is not easy. . . .

. . . . . .

There is plenty, as they say, "to see and do" in Havana.

Havana, in its newer quarters is one of those expansive, open cities. It was planned broadly and for large effect, not detail. There is a sea wall drive, for example, called the Maleçon, that is as finely impressive as any like boulevard by the Mediterranean. But the Maleçon should be driven along—as it was intended to be. Once I walked along it—and it faded. The balconied apartment houses along it that take their part in the picture admirably at forty miles an hour, at four miles an hour fade to an empty and half-hearted shabbiness. The Paseo de

Marti, or *Prado*, is a planted double boulevard that descends from a stately park in the center of the city to the point opposite El Morro where it joins the Maleçon. There is a center walk with shade, planting, and tiled benches for the weary. Excellent shops border the Prado for a time; then, again, it dwindles. Havana's plan—if one makes the needless mistake of peering too closely—seems rather more ambitious than the actual achievement. Sometimes there is just the least hint of last year's Exhibition Grounds, more lath, plaster and pretence than reality.

A short distance out along the Maleçon drive is the *Maine* monument. . . . It is a little startling, somehow, to come upon a monument to a *causus belli*. It is as if they raised a statue in Sarajevo to the assassin of the Archduke Ferdinand, or there were a memorial in Berlin to the *Lusitania*. . . . I have even heard it wondered whether the Maleçon monument was not the result of some coercion on our part.

But it was the *Maine* that turned the trick for Cuba. Their regret at the accident is tinged with satisfaction. . . .

It was a puzzling affair. No one has ever known quite what happened. Like most "incidents," the *Maine* explosion would probably have had no result had there not been long-accumulating pressure behind it.

The discontent of the Cuban colonists with the government of Spain began within a few years of the island's settlement and never wholly disappeared. No one, in the early days, was permitted to trade or settle in Cuba except a native of Castile —not even Spaniards of other provinces. The Cubans could buy from no other country. Though generations of native-

born Cuban families succeeded each other, all participation in the activities of the state were denied them.

Early in the nineteenth century the tamped-down dynamite of centuries began to explode. There were rebellions in 1820 and in 1830, a slave rebellion in the same year, then an uprising that dragged through ten years, from 1867 on. Spain's reply to every protest was substantially the same—the firing squad and those witless things that are described in history as "sterner measures."

Meanwhile the United States grew nervous-er and nervous-er. Cuba always had seemed uncomfortably close. Naval experts and military experts, who have to fill in their time somehow, were forever staring at maps and shaking their heads and clucking ominously. Cuba, in their mysterious parlance, was a "source of danger." So the United States, as early as 1825, began trying to buy Cuba. In 1848 the offer was $100,000,000, in 1858 it was lowered to $30,000,000.

We were each time rebuffed. Each time a new rebellion broke out we eyed it hopefully. Spain's affection for us, during all this, was not increased. Once, in a burst of annoyance a Spanish cruiser intercepted an American tramp steamer, well out at sea in the Caribbean, brought it into Santiago, and accused it of piratical practices. Before anyone could stop them the Spanish authorities had petulantly executed fifty-three members of the crew.

The rebellion against the home authority that broke out at last in Cuba in 1895 had a different character from its predecessors. It was organized, equipped. It apparently had the support of all parts of the island and most sections of the population.

. . . The U. S. battleship *Maine*, in February of '98, sailed into Havana harbor "to protect American interests"—that most perilous endeavor! We have learned since to groan at the very mention of it.

Shortly before ten o'clock one night the *Maine* blew up. Two hundred seventy-two American sailors were killed and the hulk went to the bottom. Perhaps the Spaniards had completely lost their heads and mined it, as they were accused of doing. But few people deliberately knock down hornets' nests. . . . Conceivably, over-anxious Cuban revolutionists touched off the fuse, anticipating the result. Or it may be that some one aboard the *Maine* merely lit a cigarette and flicked the match too far.

But—we "Remembered the *Maine*." There was a brisk, unpleasant war and a great deal of typhoid and death from epidemics. . . . Walter Reed and Carlos Finlay discovered that the mosquito called *stegomyia fasciata* carried yellow fever and the swift work began of wiping one of the world's most terrible plagues from the long-troubled earth. . . . Havana got such a scrubbing that it was turned from the dirtiest of cities into one of the cleanest. . . . And the last fragment of the colossal empire she had once owned fell through the fumbling hands of Spain.

After a three year American military occupation, Cuba attained independence—and has been enjoying it adventurously and noisily ever since. The monument to the *Maine* is no affront. With all the troubles that have come since, despite the exploiters who have followed in King Sugar's train, the new epoch has been incontestably better than the old one.

. . . There is the Old City, once confined by guardian walls, where the streets are narrow, there are iron grilles at the balconies, and the shutters open on the darkness of musty stores and shadowy, alluring bars. . . . There is the Cathedral, most of it so neatened and nicened by its ardent custodians that only the ghost of its antique beauty shows—and across the square from it, in a building that looks as if it had once housed some order of crusading knights, is a café, run by a rum company, where one can drink one's fill on the house. . . .

Equally famous—and one of those "sights" no visitor to Havana can escape, no matter how he struggles—is a certain brewery a short distance out of town. The brewery is surrounded by an attractively planted park and there is a terrace from which one gazes down upon a moderately pleasant river —and the brewery. This terrace is at all times filled with tourists. They are more than commonly silent. They stand about patiently drinking the beer that is sold them at a kiosk. Their faces are puzzled. They are wondering why they are there. . . . Once, long ago, the beer on the terrace was given away, but the human blotters of five continents learned of it and the privilege was withdrawn. Now, instead, the garden is quite pretty—the brewery no doubt an admirable brewery. You will see it. Taking people to look at it is a kind of national custom. Resistance is useless.

And one can see one of the most amazing cemeteries in the world. . . . The Cubans are as proud of Colón Cemetery as if it were the Louvre, Westminster, and Radio City all rolled into one. It is worth seeing. It represents the triumph of vulgarity over death.

Millions of dollars have been spent on it—too many millions.

All that is most hideous in the ill-digested baroque tradition in Havana's cemetery is exaggerated into vast dimensions. Angels whirl and spiral, imported marble has been converted into shapes of infinite intricacy. There is no space. Each gigantic tomb crowds on its neighbor with hardly inches to spare. Every monument has been devised to cost as much as it possibly could—and to look it. One senses the rivalry that has gone into the place, the cost in terms of debt and of deprivation of the living that these last boasts have cost. A few of the tombs, amidst the grotesque clutter, are well and coldly designed. It is the more inexcusable that their beauty should be so wasted. . . . Suave and polished dragomen are in attendance to point out various memorials and assure you of their loveliness, in which, obviously, they believe. One listens with a polite and stony smile, nodding agreement like an automaton. Someday I shall go back again to Havana for the sole purpose of saying I think their damned cemetery is bloody awful.

But, though few escape, and since both spectacles are unique few *should* escape, travellers do not go to Havana to look at breweries and cemeteries. They go to do, not see, and the doings of Havana, as is well known, are extensive.

On the Maleçon, not far from the *Maine* monument, is the Nacional Hotel. *(Not "t". Spanith hath a tendenthy to lithp.)* It is large, magnificent, one of the *luxe* hotels of the world. A few artillery scars on its exterior, suffered during a past revolution, give it an air, like sabre cuts on the cheek of a sporting Baron. The prosperous stay at the Nacional, the less prosperous walk around its lobby and hope people will think they do. Sleek cars move through its porte cochère in an almost cease-

less stream, so the problem of venturing from the Nacional is simple. All one needs is money. In Havana, plenty of it.

The famous Havana beaches are to the west, by the ornate suburb of Marianao. La Playa, the biggest of them, has as beautiful a white sand beach as any in the world. It ought to have. They bought it by the ton—from Florida. At La Playa there are a thousand bath houses. As the sun gently softens one's brain one can solemnly think about a thousand people all peeling out of bathing suits at once. . . . There are palm trees nearby with tables under them. One can eat. And waiters will bring drinks down to you to where you simmer in the sand, so one's drinking need never be interrupted.

It is the restful custom of most winter visitors to Havana to swim in the late morning, lunch, then disappear, not to reemerge until late afternoon. The cocktails of Havana "holdeth children from their play and old men from the chimney-corners." They mix them with brilliance and imagination. Two of them, the Daiquiri and the Bacardi,* rank among Cuba's major contributions to civilization.

Bars are numerous and named, many of them, with a picturesque violence. One of the mildest and quietest of them, El Florida, is the birthplace of the Daiquiri and in some magic fashion it is still better there than anywhere else on earth. It is served so close to actual freezing point that a film of ice crackles faintly as one drinks. . . . If one is unwary or unfit it can produce a most crashing tummy-ache.

Night clubs are numerous and much alike. The more attractive are built round inner patios open to the sky. A few, farther out of town, in the direction of the Marianao, are under

* Accent on the *first* syllable.

thatch or in buildings that look like circus sideshows. The mortality rate among them is high, so it would be misleading to name them. Taxi drivers are wise and currently well-informed.

There are Cuban orchestras in all of them and in all of them there is great concentration upon the rhumba—another of Cuba's major gifts to man. The personnel of the orchestras, one notices, tends toward the dark side—as do the fierce and brilliant rhythms they pour forth. While the small hours of the morning lengthen, in the quiet and sleeping wastes of the sprawling city these bright, little fires of sound and light and movement go on burning. The performers in the "floor shows" dance the Cuban dances as they should be danced. . . . Then, for contrast, the paying customers advance boldly and dance them as they shouldn't be.

There is one particular spot I have sought out several times. It is hardly a spot. It is more of a speck—and its name keeps changing so that it is difficult to find. But for some reason the magic utterance "Coney Island" once led me to it.

"It" is far outside of the city and beyond the National Casino. In a wasteland of unsuccessful sub-developements rises a square block of cheaply built connected one-storey shacks with a wide earth path outside them. There are shooting galleries, places where you pop corks at cigarette packages—all the lesser paraphernalia of a carnival. Mixed amid the concessions are half a dozen dance halls, ranging from low to utter lowest, as do the patrons.

I have never seen any Americans there, nor any Cubans of the better class. But in a dismal, ill-lit, shabby little restaurant with a white tiled floor that is badly cracked, where the total

check for four people was once under a dollar, I have seen such dancing as may rarely be found on earth.

The orchestra consisted of five amiable looking ruffians who sat on a tiny platform of bare planks. They wore shirts and no collars and the shirts could have done with washing. They incessantly smoked black cigarettes—and they played magnificently. The entertainers—they may still be there—were a lean young negro, black as soot, in tight trousers and a ruffled blue rayon blouse and a mulatto girl with a body beautiful as a panther's—wearing less. What they danced was merely the rhumba, and the *conga* and the rest, with an occasional interval of queer voodooistic ritual. But one felt these were not hired dancers; that they danced because they must, because of a fury and a beauty that was born in them. The dull, shabby people at the tables watched them sombrely, as they would watch some rite. They had come, one saw, to have a need fulfilled, and they were satisfied. The atmosphere of "Coney Island"—like many places frequented by the outcast and the poor—is gentle, quietly friendly. At three-thirty in the morning the customers, it is true, look like trunk murderers. Yet one has a complete sense of safety.

. . . In Havana one need *never* go to bed. There is always the Casino.

It, too, is some distance out of town, logically close to the shore suburbs and Country Club quarter where so amazingly many Americans have built winter homes—built them with the single minded purpose of never being in them. The Casino may be closed for breakfast, but certainly until that hour it is in full blast.

The National Casino of Cuba compares by no means un-

favorably with the best of them. It is a handsome white building in adequate grounds. The entrance is impressive and there are just enough steps to be managed gracefully—to permit of one chest expansion and haughty look on the part of males, one good swish and hitching up of the opera cape on the part of females. There is a restaurant and ballroom like that of any first class international hotel and an exceptionally large game room. Superb crystal chandeliers hang from a high ceiling, decorous and distinguished-looking croupiers preside over green baize roulette and dice tables.

Evening clothes, rather curiously, are not required at the Havana Casino, yet the majority of players, just in the course of things, do come dressed and there are rarely enough of the under-dressed to spoil the effect. One thing—most necessary in a city daily inundated by tourists—is forbidden. You cannot play roulette in plus fours and a golf cap, or even in a half-sleeved yellow shirt and flannels. People have tried it—and been forcibly removed. Sports clothes are *verboten.* Sighing for the money that such costumes often conceal, the Management nevertheless feels that gambling has its code. Its ordinary rigors are quite hard enough without having to look at people who have been dressed for the West Indies. . . .

Havana, of course, "isn't Cuba." But then, neither is Cuba the West Indies. It is a place apart, unlike Europe, unrelated to the islands near it or to either of the continents. Cuba's charm is bold, its sense of pleasure dashing, speculative. It has a kind of splendor. But it is a strident splendor.

. . . . . .

Beyond Havana there is all of Cuba. Yet it is neither due to perversity nor accident that only a minute fraction of a per

cent of those who visit Cuba ever do go far beyond. Penetration is made difficult, for all but people who are specialists in Latin-American travel or those whose business gives them clear destinations and associates along the way, by the general lack of accommodations and the—quite reasonable—Cuban lack of knowledge of any tongue but Spanish. There are few towns in Cuba that do not have hotels, but they are hotels for Cubans, and not for Cubans of the better class. Menus are apt to be monotonously local, beds are usually of almost British badness, and the hot and dusty streets and the traditions of Africa and Castile make cleanliness uncommon. Nor have the common towns much to offer. They exist, as do most small communities the world over, to serve the farm countries around them, in the case of Cuba usually either sugar or tobacco districts. Little wealth or taste has been lavished on them and they are singularly alike.

Santiago, on the southeastern coast, at the end of the great Carretera Central, has, however, a distinct character. Santiago stands on steep slopes rising from a remarkable harbor, its streets are narrow, queer and picturesque. No community in Cuba is more literally colorful. Roofs are red and few walls have been left white. The Santiagans have expressed their temperament with kalsomine pots of vivid blue, of dusky reds, of all shades of green and yellow. The country nearby (where Colonel Theodore Roosevelt rode dustily to fame up San Juan Hill) is bare and the sun beats down through the clarity of still, dry air. Beneath it the brilliant color, the splashes of green palms and scarlet vines of Santiago flicker with carnival violence. It is a chromatic experience. The pauper byways, the little open bars, the unfamiliar, many-complexioned people

who are its citizens make it a place worth many hours of attentive wandering. There is a Morro Castle in Santiago, some monuments and a small and charming plaza in the upper town, faced by the wide, shady terrace of a far-better-than-characteristic Cuban hotel. But Santiago's satisfactions are in casual sights and unpredictable encounters. Any traveller who makes the trip by bus from Havana to Santiago and back will have seen most of the great island and certainly the best of it.

A shorter journey from Havana, one that can be made either by auto or by the railroad, is to the large city of Matanzas, about sixty miles from the capital. Some of the way passes through characteristic Cuban sugar cane country, and, as more unusual objectives, tourists are shown the vast and remarkable stalactitic limestone Caves of Bellamar, and the beautifully fertile and dramatic Yumuri Valley. Those whose stay in Havana is brief or who find its charms difficult to quit, can, by the Matanzas trip, considerably enlarge their Cuban horizons in a single day.

IV — *JAMAICA*

THE islands are utterly various. It is as difficult to make an emphatic choice among them as to name one best among all books. The "favorite" of most people is probably Jamaica—for the simple reason that most have been there. Jamaica is as different from Cuba as if nine thousand, not ninety, miles of ocean lay between them.

A plane leaves Miami at daybreak. In the silence and darkness before the sun there is still a chill of the north. The black, uncertain shapes of the gardens by the road out to the airport have not yet the heavy exuberance of the tropics. The edge and flavor of the air remain familiar. When the yellow sun comes over the sea's rim the immense seaplane rips over the wave tops, lifts, seems to become almost still. The flat dunes and swamps of Florida below are obscured by a vast layer of clouds, white and infinite as an Arctic snowfield. The dawn

colors them rose and mauve, round rainbows lie on them like magic wreaths. . . . Cuba, in the later morning, at the narrow point where the plane crosses it, is harsh, brown, impersonal. South of it the Caribbean has a different color. Its blue is somehow warmer, the floating cloud drifts move with tropic leisure. As the plane hurtles on toward Jamaica often there is a curious, towering lane of clouds that rises nearly two miles into the sky and is as clearly defined as a river. The cloud bank marks the narrow path of a warm current that is deflected by the island's southern coast.

The dark mass of Jamaica takes dim shape, resolves itself into rugged, forest-covered ranges stretching far away to the east. Looking down from the plane the narrow coastal lowlands and the gradually rising land behind them shows intricate and constant proof of habitation. Narrow, twining roads of yellow dirt pattern it like the veins of a leaf. Fields, due to the irregularity of the land, are never square, but their curious, complicated shapes are defined with an absolute precision. Crops—difficult to identify from nearly two miles above them —are set out with nicety and care.

One has a sense of England. The resemblance is remote and not easy to define. Tiny Negro huts clinging to jungled hillsides, fields of bananas and sugar, are certainly not strongly reminiscent of Kent. But the lanes wind with a certain coziness, the villages have a look of comfortable permanence, neat church steeples peep from among the mango and the breadfruit trees.

The impression is correct. Jamaica is as English as Queen Victoria—and somewhat the same shape; compact and billowy.

How it came by its extreme British-ness is just a little puz-

zling. That it has been a colony of the Crown now for a matter of just under three hundred years may of course have something to do with it. But of the million people who inhabit Jamaica today only a fractional number are white and of those there are many who have never seen England. Nor were there ever more of them in the years when the mold was setting. In Jamaica one feels that there was some natural affinity of the spirit between the nature of the Negro and the manners and morals of mid-Victorian England. The process of combination has created an odd atmosphere. Amid the glorious tropical uplands of the island, or from the immense cultivated forests of bananas, suddenly one catches a whiff of musty curtains, of shuttered, cluttered rooms and coal grates that are drawing badly; a vision floats before one's surprised subconsciousness of what-not cabinets and horsehair sofas.

. . . There is a sign by a taxi parking place in Kingston. Painted on it is the legend: "Stand for ten mechanically propelled hackney carriages." That sign poses the issue squarely. Only an Englishman could call a taxi a "mechanically propelled hackney carriage." But he would have to be a black Englishman to paint it on a sign. In short, a Jamaican. . . . But, though confusing, it is cozy. And the island is completely beautiful.

. . . . . .

Columbus discovered it, of course. He came upon Jamaica during the second voyage, that splendid expedition of the fifteen hundred men and the seventeen ships. It was populated, as were the other northern islands, by unwarlike Arawaks. But, though the natives' amiability and the splendor of the

island's scenery were noted, Xaymaca—"land of waters"—as they called it, showed no promise of gold, so the fleet sailed on. Columbus took home with him the tale of another island, that was all. These gifts of islands to his queen were becoming so plentiful it was hard to remember them all.

Then, toward the end, the Admiral came again. The weaver's son, the solemn, tall young clerk who had dreamed of himself as a great adventurer, was making his fourth, last voyage. He had fulfilled his destiny superbly. Fumbling, unfit, not always truthful, the spark he had lit and nurtured had grown to a consuming flame. His tricks of publicity, his tales of wonder had dislodged the avalanche. Now it had swept past and over him. He was growing old and men were tired of him.

Christopher Columbus had discovered much. Yet the gallants and the paupers who had followed in his wake and on his promises had few of them prospered. Many had died and most had failed. Their "sharp and tedious hunger" for gold, as the missionary Las Casas had called it, had been so poorly fed that when men remembered Christopher Columbus now it was too often but to curse his name.

For the fourth, last voyage there were only four ships and they were old and ill-fitted. To get them from his now wearied royal patrons Columbus had had this time to talk even more grandly. What he had found was not enough for them. His salesmanship had to be pressed once more into the service of his restless dream. His voice must sometimes have grown very tired. This time he said, if they would send him, he surely would find gold. The Lord Christ himself had appeared to him in a vision and faithfully promised it, when seven years were up . . . Besides, the end of the world was coming soon

and Spain must have the promised gold so in a last Crusade the Holy Land could be won back from the infidels before the Judgment. As soon as the gold was found he would go to the North Pole, for there were Christians there. . . .

So the ships were given him. They told him he must not go back to Haiti, which was the seat of Spanish government. He had quarrelled there with the authorities. Except for that the Admiral could go sailing where he wished.

It was a long, unhappy voyage, ill-fated from the start. Slowly the little fleet went blundering through the islands, then up along the coast of Central America. At one point they landed and the Discoverer attempted to found a settlement. But the ships had yawed and drifted in the calms of the fever coast for almost a year, they had found nothing, the little colony was a miserable place, they were anxious to be gone. Only two vessels were left and those were so leaky and worm-rotted there was doubt that they could float them off. But anything was better than to stay there at the earth's edge and be forgotten.

The Admiral got them as far as Jamaica, a matter of some six hundred miles. By the time they reached the island the caravels could go no farther. They were water-logged, half-sinking. Columbus was ill, darkened and sick in mind. For weeks he had lain bedridden in the sweltering heat of his cabin. But he roused himself to order that the ships be beached in a cove. From that lonely shore they could send for help.

The place is not precisely known. It was somewhere near St. Ann's, near the center of the northern coast. The sick, defeated Admiral and his ragged remnant of men remained there for a year. A messenger somehow got to Cuba by canoe, and

from there to the capital city at Santo Domingo. But the Spanish Governor, from sheer spitefulness, and because, like many men, to hound and injure fallen greatness delighted him, delayed rescue far longer than he needed. Those at St. Ann's, of course, did not even know until the year was up and rescue came whether their message for help had reached its destination.

Jamaica was the only one of the islands he discovered that Columbus was intimately to know or ever spend much time upon. He had found near St. Ann's, as it happened, as fertile and beautiful a spot as he could have hit upon, where the mountains crowd close to the sea and the steady wind is cool. But it could not have been a pleasant visit. The Admiral was sick, his men were blackly pessimistic, they had no adequate supplies. Oddly little is known of how their time was spent. Apparently it did not enter their Castilian heads to occupy themselves with farming or hut building.

There is a reference to the fact that the neighboring Indians, "due to ill-treatment," tired of supplying the party with food. When one reflects upon the well-known virility of Spanish adventurers, the frequency of moonlit evenings and the accessibility of smooth-skinned Indian women, one can imagine the nature of some, at least, of the ill-treatment. . . . Then, there is a puzzling tale of how Columbus won them back again.

He was living in a cave—no one knows the cave and one wonders why dampness attracted him, but so the story is staged—at the time the Indians stopped fetching in supplies. So he hailed some chiefs before him and informed them that if further donations were not at once forthcoming, on a cer-

tain night at a certain hour he would black the moon from out their sky.

The device is an old one, of course, and has respectable standing in the annals of exploring. Unlike the simple Indians, the Great Navigator knew of the imminence of an eclipse. It happened as he had promised, they were properly impressed and the offerings of food were resumed. The legend is a pretty one and one hopes it happened. It is possible, of course, that during the ten years that he had been voyaging the Admiral had learned not only navigation but astronomy. When he left Palos with the Pinzons he would no more have been capable of the prediction of an eclipse than he would have been able to fit the *Santa Maria* with a wireless set.

Later there was a mutiny against him and at last rescue arrived. The great Admiral got home to Spain. He died soon afterward, almost forgotten.

But his long residence had established a clear claim. For the century and a half that Spain held Jamaica it was governed by his descendants or by men they appointed.

The Spanish record, long enough in time, is brief in details. The Arawak Indians, as usual, were so promptly butchered that Negro slaves began being imported as early as 1517.

Jamaica had no gold, so the few colonists who were induced to settle there remained, as they did upon so many of the islands, with a conviction that they were stranded, that fate had dealt miserably with them. There was justice in the belief. Governors forbade emigration. For Jamaica had a minor place in the general plan of things.

Cattle had been left upon the island and, as in Haiti, it had enormously increased. Also as in Haiti, the Jamaican colonists

hunted it, and dried the meat. The "plate ships" bringing silver from the Isthmus and gold from Mexico found Jamaica a useful way point of the homeward voyage where they could get supplies.

It must have been a queer and lonely island. A census survives for the year 1611—after a century of settlement. There were 1510 persons on the whole of Jamaica—where a million today still leave each other elbow room. There were 523 Spaniards, 173 children (children, in the mind of the Abbot who did the counting, seem to have been regarded as a separate nationality), 107 free Negroes, 74 native Indians—all that were left!—558 slaves, 75 foreigners. Visitors from Europe spoke slightingly of all of them. The Jamaican colonists "had no courage," they were lazy, they quarrelled with each other, they had "clownish manners."

They were singularly easy to defeat.

In 1655 Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, first prototype of the breed of twentieth century dictators, sent an expedition to the Caribbean with the frank purpose of obtaining "an Establishment in the West Indies which is possessed by the Spaniards."

The expeditionary force was composed of "thieves, cutpurses, and such-like lewd persons . . . a wicked army, sent out without arms or provisions" and it was led by two superlative incompetents named Penn and Venables. Nothing, in fact was right about any of it except the two gentlemen's names. They had been roundly trounced by the Spaniards when they made an attempt to take Haiti, and battles by either sea or land simply scared the daylights out of them. The venture was one of those incidents in the history of England which

has been dropped down behind the bureau and forgotten. But what could have been more Jamaican than commanders called "Penn and Venables"? It sounds so eminently respectable, like the name of a drapery establishment, or of the partners in a respected firm of ironmongers.

Jamaica fell to them. It would have fallen with equal ease to a Boy Scout troop. Great Britain moved in, sat down comfortably and has been there ever since.

They went at settlement with great thoroughness. The year after the Inglorious Conquest, sixteen hundred "souls" were brought from the island of Nevis and settled, and not long after another thousand were fetched from Barbadoes. Similar batches kept dropping in from less promising sites all over the Caribbean. After thirty short years of English rule there were already seventy sugar mills on the island and several score cocoa and indigo farms. Virtue was triumphing. Plus a convenient open-mindedness.

It was the middle of the seventeenth century and the buccaneers were at the peak of their activity. Jamaica was conveniently located—somewhat apart from the other islands, yet in sailing range of Panama and the cities of the Main. Soon after the English occupancy the pirates made it their headquarters.

Kingston Harbor, on the south coast of the island, is enclosed by a long peninsula of sand. At the tip of it—in what must have always been a singularly unattractive location under the full impact of the sun was established the now almost legendary city of Port Royal.

A "city" it was not, of course. But it was undoubtedly an amazing town. Those who knew it were unanimous in calling

it the "finest" of the West Indies. And for a time it was actually one of the richest in the world. Piracy was enjoying the benefits of efficient management and was doing extremely well. Plantations were springing up all over the Caribbean, dividends were good, so slave-running from Africa was at its most active. Trade was flourishing.

"Port Royal is like a continual Mart or Fair, where all sorts of choice Merchandise are daily imported, not only to furnish the island, but vast quantities are thence again transported to supply the Spaniards, Indians and other Nations, who in exchange return us bars and cakes of gold, wedges and pigs of silver, Pieces-of-Eight, with store of wrought jewels, Pearl necklaces, and of pearls unsorted several Bushels. . . . In Port Royal there is more plenty of running cash (to the number of its inhabitants) than there is in London."

The ships lay beyond the town inside the harbor; high-pooped, carved and gilded galleons, taken as pirates' prizes; rigs and hulls of every kind and country, each of them marked with a kind of outlaw raffishness. The big slavers from the Guinea trade were anchored apart from the rest lest the filthy stink of them offend even the insensitive nostrils of Port Royal.

The streets of the town were narrow, its houses a queer jumble of Negro shacks, shippers' warehouses, balconied dwellings of massive stone built by cheap slave labor, wooden taverns with tables stolen from captive galleons, and winecups from an admiral's cabin, their walls studded for decoration with the figureheads of Spanish prizes.

Port Royal kept the night. Rum was plentiful, women of all races and nations had come to where, if disease or brutality

did not take them first, they might gather untidy fortunes. The buccaneers were deeply conscious of their own romantic role. Port Royal was theirs, the place where plans were formed, crews gathered and spoils spent. They dressed their part, in big-topped Spanish boots, in stolen laces—sometimes ripped and still showing the color of rust where a rapier had pierced—in velvets stiffened by the sweat of battles. They were bearded, bronzed, violent in their pleasures, preposterously reckless in their spending. There was no law.

On the morning of June 7, 1692—said the pious, who lived elsewhere—God grew tired. From somewhere came a grumbling and terrifying roar, the earth shook and cracked and broke. Port Royal smashed like a fragile toy under a boot heel. Three thousand buildings were thrown down. Part of the town was pitched into the sea.

". . . Whole streets with their inhabitants were swallowed up by the opening of the earth, which then shut upon them, squeezed the people to death, and in that manner several were left with their heads above the ground, and others covered with dust. It was a sad sight to see the harbor covered with dead bodies of people of all conditions . . . for the burying place was destroyed by the earthquake and the sea washed the carcasses of those who had been buried out of their graves."

The hint was taken. Port Royal's existence ceased. The few survivors, chastened in manners and morals, moved across the bay to Kingston.

Kingston is now the sole port of arrival for all passenger ships that reach Jamaica—and they come in increasing scores each season. It would be rude to Kingston to say that this is unfortunate. But one may note it with the same headshake

with which, say, Californians mark their regret when they hear that a foreign visitor has penetrated no deeper into the United States than 59th Street.

Kingston is a large city, larger, one thinks sometimes on warm days, than its 120,000-odd population warrants. It lies on a plain with hills behind it. But the hills are six miles or more away and the plain is wide and often hot.

The town is laid out rectangularly, the streets are wide, and arcaded so that one may walk in shade and shelter in either sun or rain. There are large shops, with the profusion of display once typical of country general stores, but here turned tropical and English. There are parks, with trees in them; a few pretty foul pieces of public statuary. Physically, there is little to add to the description. . . . One of those devoted guide books that puts everything of importance in leaded type struggles through ten full pages listing the Kingston "sights." But it is uphill work and the effort rapidly deteriorates into detailed instructions as to how to find your way to such feasts for the eye and spirit as Barclay's Bank—1909: "the plinth is finished with green marble from Sweden"; and the Ward Theatre—1912: "A portrait of the generous donor hangs in the vestibule."

The fact is, Kingston with all of the past that might have enriched it, was thrown down by an earthquake in 1907—one of the most violent in Caribbean history. A friend who survived it, perhaps because at the time he happened to be in an open field, told me that the meadow surged like a stormy sea. Fire followed the shock and made a clean sweep, so Kingston, though no doubt cleaner and more liveable than before the quake, today is wholly new.

What remains, of course, is people—and that intangible, so feebly called "atmosphere." Of both, in Kingston, there are plenty.

Few cities in the West Indies are so swarmingly, colorfully populous. Jamaicans are predominantly black, but they are black without monotony.

Stalwart, full-blooded Negroes, so healthy that they shine like polished furniture, are in the majority, but shadings are infinite. Race prejudice in Jamaica, one gathers from a thoughtful glance, has always ceased with the curfew. Admixture has been so complete that among long-resident Jamaican families there are indeed few who have remained incontrovertibly white. But the definition of whiteness is loose in Jamaican society and the pallid of tint are accepted—or declined—socially upon the criteria of their individual character, position and income.

Black and white have by no means been the only tints drawn upon. There are several thousand industrious Chinese resident on the island,—most of them grocers—and at one time there was an influx of immigrants from British India. All have blended—with sometimes remarkably curious results. All the minglings make up the shifting, vivid crowd.

The sun is brilliant. Those buildings that are not limed a glaring white are tinted through a range of pastel shades. The cerise and magenta of the flowers of the bougainvillea vine make splashes of strong color above garden walls. Trolley cars (at tuppence a ride they provide the best of ways to see Kingston) clang through crowded traffic. Preoccupied little burros hauling creaking two-wheeled carts plod amidst honking, hurrying cars. Resplendent black policemen in sun hel-

mets, white tunics, polished black boots and blue trousers with broad red stripes, stand at intersections and direct traffic with far more of an air than Napoleon could ever have displayed at Austerlitz.

There is of course no Jamaican "native dress" but the free exuberance of local taste sometimes makes for an equivalent. The Kingston colored have the instinct of their race—when they can afford it—for bright apparel. A young brown woman, soft as ripe fruit, goes by in skyblue, high-heeled shoes, a clinging dress of rose-pink satin and a floppy hat of turkey red. A young mulatto lounging at a street corner—not far from a sign on a wall that admonishes "DON'T LEAN!"—wears an orange sport coat with an immense purple handkerchief in the breast pocket, grey flannel slacks and pointed yellow shoes. . . . Kingston—unlike Havana—is a city to be walked in, eyed amusedly, leisuredly flavored. Part of its English-ness is that one likes it more as time passes. Things British do not expect you to throw yourself into their arms at once. They would think it forward of you.

There is an excellent hotel—the Myrtle Bank—on the shorefront in Kingston in its own cool garden, with its own swimming pool at the sea's edge, and there are other *de luxe* hotels, clubs and golf courses behind the city near the hills. All of Jamaica is in fact unique among the West Indian islands in the number of hotels and lodgings that it offers. One can go anywhere and always find a comfortable stopping place. There is no sounder reason for its popularity. So many of the other islands, equally beautiful, beseech visitors, then rebuff them with a total absence of any accommodations. It is a

mundane consideration, but it is no mark of softness or inadequacy as a traveller to like a place to lie down.

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Hotels—and accessibility. Jamaica excels in both. The island is less than one hundred fifty miles long and less than fifty miles across at its widest, yet somehow into that space have been jammed four thousand miles of motor roads, two hundred and ten miles of railroad.

It is the claim of the island that it represents an "epitome" of the tropics—that typically low-latitude mountains, shores, plantation lands, uplands, botany and climates may all be found within comfortable reach of each other. There is some truth in it.

A daily train plies the long diagonal from Kingston on the southeast coast to the popular beach resort of Montego Bay on the northwest coast. Few tourists—unless they are short on funds and long on curiosity—take the trip. It takes seven hours, stops are casual and frequent. The first class compartments, furnished with—of all things!—ancient black leather Morris chairs, are usually deserted, except perhaps for a detached-looking minor English official. The second-class cars are open, are supplied with clean varnished slat seats and are as populous as a Negro slum. In both there is copious soot from the engine, but it has the advantage of falling upon one in such massive lumps that they scarcely constitute dirt. The coals can be removed one by one from the hair, like pebbles, and thrown out the window.

Within, if one avoids the dismal rigors of first class, all is amiability, blackness, good manners, the stir and interest and

vitality of life. Ragged, muscular plantation laborers get on for short rides between way-stations; very small, large-eyed colored babies wander solemnly along the aisles eating sugar cakes; black ladies with the shapes of hippopotami tell each other stories and laugh till they shake like jellies. . . . Without, passes the varied panorama of the island.

Jamaica is one of the greatest banana producing countries in the world. They are its prime crop and chief source of revenue. Twenty million "stems" are shipped each year. The railroad line passes between immense fields of them a little outside of town—the tallest banana trees I have seen anywhere in the world—forests of giant and shining leaves heavy with pendants of green fruit. Beyond, still in the lowland plain, are stretches of open pasture country with the dry pale grass and little scattered trees of the highlands of East Africa; then a rocky, sun-killed wasteland tangled with the waxy scrub that in the tropics everywhere encroaches on dead land. Soon the way begins to rise.

Most of Jamaica is mountainous. Different parts of the ranges have wholly different character. The Blue Mountains, in the eastern quarter of the island, are sheer, rugged and forest-covered. Blue Mountain Peak rises to an elevation of more than seven thousand feet. They are remote and cool. The silence is broken only by bird notes in the woods, the air is fresh and scented with the odor of coffee flowers.

Along the railroad line to Montego Bay the uplands are domestic, comfortable. Cleared meadows alternate with small patches of trees and fields of sugar and tobacco. Light mountain rains briefly shadow the sun, then pass on the gentle wind, leaving the multiple greens brighter and dew-shining.

One loses all sense of being on an island. Distances seem continental. From the summits one looks down long sweeps of valleys to vague horizons. There are farms and habitations everywhere, and frequent villages (two upon the way have the surprising names of Anchovy and Maggotty), yet there is room enough. No part of Jamaica seems oppressively cluttered.

Beyond, just before the way starts down again to the sea, is the Cockpit Country, as strange and savage a terrain as exists among the islands. Its savagery, it is true, is largely geological.

Big mountains have been carved by erosion into innumerable little ones, violent hillocks with nearly vertical slopes that crowd together in their hundreds, no more than a gunshot apart. They are covered with scrub forest, there is not level ground enough among them for a stork to rest upon one leg. Yet a few seekers of independence and privacy have settled the whole region.

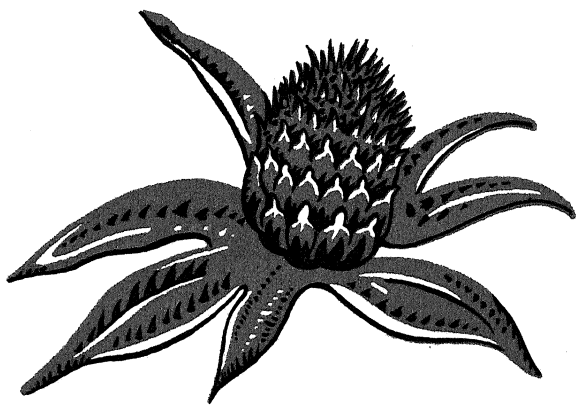
Thatched or corrugated iron huts, some of them no more than five or six feet square, hang on the precipitous slopes and house large and apparently happy families. Babies, being of a mountaineer breed, somehow do not roll from the open doors into the abyss, but one wonders how they manage not to.

Deep in the Cockpit Country, away from either road or railroad, lies a still independent principality, the Kingdom of the Maroons.

The "Maroons"—from a Spanish word that meant "the fierce ones"—were originally Negro and half-breed Indian slaves who escaped from their Spanish masters at the time of the English conquest of the island. The runaways found hiding places among the most inaccessible and distant hills, adjusted themselves to the ways of a primitive life—not long

past in their own history—and for a century mastered their own destiny and imperilled that of the colony.

Their numbers were constantly swelled by fresh runaways. Any slave—one finds a sporting satisfaction in it—who could reach the Maroon country was safe from recapture. Isolated plantations were in perpetual hazard of raid by them. The number of Maroons in the Jamaican mountains is supposed at one time to have reached a total of sixty thousand.



The nuisance at last became too embarrassing and too costly to be borne. In 1795 the British Empire fought a million dollar war to clear the Maroon nest. But their eyrie among the jungled crags was so high and awkwardly placed that the power of England had to content itself with peace rather than complete victory. A large proportion of the Maroons who had been taken captive were deported to Nova Scotia. A treaty was signed with the remainder. The Maroons would no longer raid the lowlands. In exchange for that promise they

should enjoy within the borders of the Cockpit Country a kind of perpetual sovereignty. The compact has been kept. The Kingdom of the Maroons now numbers less than a thousand highly virtuous blacks of Protestant habit and persuasion. But they obey their own hereditary ruler and live apart from the other islanders. They pay no taxes and are exempt from military draft.

. . . . . .

Montego Bay is blue and clear. There is a view of soft green hills beyond it and a reef outside sieves the sea to perpetual lapping gentleness—and also keeps out sharks. The town itself is old and quiet and moderately attractive.

What gives the place a constantly enlarging fame, however, are the hotels that are strung out along the shore for a mile or so beyond the town. They are almost all of them excellent. They are terraced and verandahed, as tropical inns should be, and they are placed so that they get the savor and coolness of the wind that blows from the sea. Montego Bay has an exquisitely clean sand beach. In the days of winter the sun is hot enough to thaw the last creaks from one's bones and spirit, after dusk cool enough to wear decent clothes with comfort, and then sleep soundly.

Agreeable people frequent Montego Bay. As in all of British Jamaica, sports of every kind are immediately available. There is bridge and tea and conversation, one may rest and tan slowly to any selected Jamaican shade.

There are other places like it. Port Antonio, also on the northern coast but at the island's other end, is more beautifully placed and equally equipped for comfort. The moun-

tains are nearer and more verdant, the bay more deeply indented. The prolificacy of hotels, the number and excellence of Jamaican roads—though car-hire is decidedly expensive—make change of mind possible. One can choose a place to stay with no oppressive sense of being everlastingly committed. By the simple device of slapping shut a suitcase and paying the bill one can move on, either in search of better or merely of variety.

My own taste is for the central parishes of St. Ann's and St. Catherine's. But then, oceans make me squint, and I regard swimming—of course the opinion is indefensible—as valuable or interesting only in event of shipwreck.

St. Ann's and St. Catherine's are the district of the pen-keepers. Pen-keeping is Jamaican slang for livestock farming. Though bipeds and bananas thrive in the lowlands, beef cattle, sheep, pigs, and burros prefer the cooler air and better scenery of the highlands. The middle parishes are the island's pasture country.

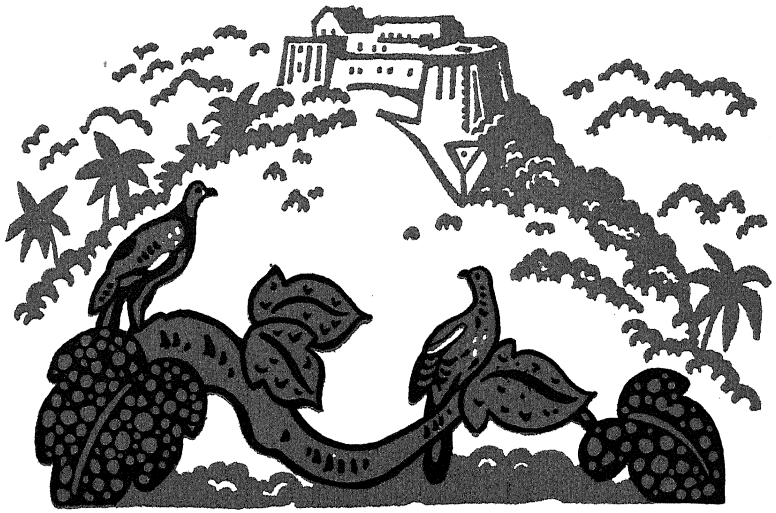
It is a truly lovely region. That word that the French use for their own countryside occurs to one. The rolling uplands of Jamaica are *douce*. They are sweet, and soft, and quiet, and old. They have the richness of the tropics, yet none of its violence, its sometimes too-heavy exuberance. The sun is warm, but the fire and impact have gone out of it. There are patches of woods, but they are friendly woods, with nothing of jungle about them. It is a wide, calm country of trees and streams and meadows.

People have a way of going back to Jamaica. They confess it sometimes a little shamefacedly, as if, when they had leisure and opportunity, they should show more impulse to adven-

ture. . . . With so many other islands so near, perhaps one really should try another. Just for change. But people have lived their whole lives out on Jamaica, and never complained of monotony. If one wants change, it can be discovered within twenty miles. And everything is *very* comfortable.

Jamaica is a big island, it is extremely populous and it has been long settled. Its districts therefore are numerous and its towns and small settlements legion. Spanish Town, the most important town of the island before it was taken by the British, is the terminal of a favorite short drive from Kingston. Some Government buildings of the English epoch stand around a square, there is a notable and none-too-lovely statue of the great Admiral Rodney, and a much-restored red brick Cathedral, but most of Spanish Town consists—never a very exciting spectacle—of places where something was before, and the neighborhood is commonplace.

But Jamaica, among its other conveniences, supports an excellent Tourist Bureau, unmissably in the heart of Kingston, where the curious can acquire advice and information of all sorts. Hotels, "drives" and expeditions of all sorts are listed and intelligently explained and data is precisely up to date. No one can make inquiries about Jamaica at a foreign travel agency or approach it on a ship without being furnished with admirable printed advice on all details of interest.



V — *HAITI*

THE buccaneers made Haiti French. Wealth, tragedy, then human greatness made it black.

After the extermination of the first tiny colony built of the wreckage of the *Santa Maria* on the north coast the center of the Spanish interest moved south and east. Bartholomew Columbus, brother of the Discoverer, founded the settlement of Santo Domingo, in what is now the Dominican Republic, in 1496. The few first huts of the white men were replaced by stone and the precarious encampment grew to a solid city. Santo Domingo City became the seat of government and the focus of Spanish activity throughout the Caribbean. The western end of the island, beyond high and nearly impassable

mountain ranges and hundreds of miles away by sea, was left almost untouched. The few Spanish settlers at that end had no protectors. If foreign filibusters chose to raid their pig-pens or take their bundles of hard-grown tobacco leaves there was little they could do about it. At no time were there very many of them. By the middle of the seventeenth century those few had given up and gone.

The squatter settlement on the little offshore island of Tortuga at length grew almost respectable. The buccaneers continued to make it their capital and haven, but Tortuga's Governor became an appointee of a French merchant company, complete with shareholders and a charter, and before long trade and honest planting were paying better dividends than piracy and attracting abler men.

It was soon discovered that the wide plains of northern and middle Haiti made fine sugar land. With sugar fetching eighty cents a pound on the European market it was not long before the meager tobacco farms of the early peasant colonists gave way to more profitable cane. Soon capital was found to buy slaves to work it.

Haiti—which meant "the high place"—the aboriginal Indian name of the whole island, Columbus of course had changed to Hispaniola, but with the Admiral's customary unsuccess as a geographical god-parent, the name Hispaniola never stuck. Soon the whole island was called after its chief city, the French end by the French version of the words Saint Domingue.

The colony of Saint Domingue rose quickly to wealth and eminence. Great numbers of Frenchmen of all classes came, settled and prospered. Every franc that could be spared went

into the purchase of new slaves, for healthy blacks from the Guinea Coast of Africa were the way to a sugar fortune and the more of them one had—since land was readily available—the more quickly did one's fortune mount. It was not long before Saint Domingue came to be regarded among the professional slave traders as the best market for their goods in the whole of the new world. The French planters wanted only healthy blacks and men of good physique, for the work of the cane fields was hard and they were willing to pay accordingly. So they got the pick of Africa. . . . It was the labor of Frankenstein. Heedlessly, incalculably, they built their ruin. The high-priced breed they bought had strength in it and seeds of greatness.

That is why today Haiti is a free Republic; why two and a half million vigorous blacks crowd the ten thousand square miles of Haitian territory and leave room for no more whites than might all leave some morning on a single ship; why it is a place of moods, of light and of harsh shadows; of strong repulsions and strong attractions, like no other country in the world.

Long occupancy made the French claim good. Spain's protest at the enormous trespass, always feeble, at last ceased altogether. The western French third of the island was ceded to France by Spain by treaty in 1697.

Wealth in Saint Domingue increased and tension with it. The rich planters lived magnificently. Tens of thousands of acres of sugar were in full bearing, demand grew faster than the cane and the price kept high. The hardy, lonely days of the wild cattle hunters had gone forever. Women had come to rule over the fine houses with the great walled gardens

round them that stood in the midst of the cane fields, sons and daughters were sent home to France to school. Servants were beyond numbering. Gilded and painted carriages rolled in the dust of the hot roads. Ships brought wine from France and fine rum was a waste product from the sugar mills.

Yet it was a limited magnificence. The mansions on the French plantations were of good design and well built of brick and stone covered with white mortar. But they were nearly empty. The whites who lived in them wore the costliest stuffs that the markets of the world afforded—and in the time of the last Bourbon kings men as well as women could spend a fortune on a single costume. Their jewels were more splendid than those of the courtiers of Versailles, for they were marked by a provincial vulgarity. Yet when the owners of the great estates gathered for their incessant banquets and prolonged house parties, though they sometimes dined from golden plates, they sat on plain long benches and dined from bare board tables. Few had carpets or pictures, tapestries or any furniture fitted to their state.

Like many colonials they all dreamed, when they had made enough, of going home. But it was more than that. In their hearts they were afraid. Some day the spell would break.

In the colony of Saint Domingue in the years just prior to the outbreak of the French Revolution there were forty thousand whites, their number sharply divided between those of the planter class and the "poor whites" abysmally beneath them, twenty-four thousand free mulattoes, an anomalous group both envying and hated, and half a million Negro slaves . . . the strong, "best" slaves that a century of wealth had bought. Such discrepancy could not last. The custom of

bare houses was perhaps no more than a queer fashion. But one may fancy the subconscious dread was always there. They were ready, when the hour should come, for flight.

Come it did. With the outbreak of the Paris revolution the demand for freedom was at once heard in Haiti.

Rebellion was first made articulate in the colony by the educated free mulattoes. They asked for equal political rights with their white cousins, no more. They, too, were slave owners. The liberation of the blacks was farthest from their thoughts. But the spark once set glowing, such giant passions blew on it that no one could halt the flame. It raged unchecked for twenty years. The political protests of the small class of freedmen was lost in the colossal clamour of the blacks that they be loosed from bondage. The rulers of the island, for all of their bare floors and empty walls, held on too long.

When the smoke of the great carnage cleared, a few had gone but most were dead. There was not a whole house standing in all of Saint Domingue. The great slave leader Toussaint L'Ouverture had swept his conquering army over the whole of the island, had won freedom for his race, in the end had been tricked into disaster and had ended his life in a dungeon in the Jura mountains.

The greatest expeditionary force in the history of France had come to Haiti * under the immediate direction of Napoleon Bonaparte and the leadership of his brother-in-law General Victor LeClerc. After long and weary campaigning over the steep hills and under the island's burning sun, it had

* The name of the French part of the island was changed to Haiti at the time of the accession of the black Emperor Jean Jacques Dessalines, after the withdrawal of the French.

been beaten by the slave armies and its shattered remnant driven home. The whites were gone forever and Haiti was free. A mulatto president ruled a Republic in the south and made his capital in Port au Prince. An ex-slave and stable-boy, an illiterate black named Henry Christophe, had formed a kingdom in the north. . . .

His stage was small and his hour was short. But his stature looms across a century. He was one of the great men of the earth.

. . . . . .

Haiti is not, in the sense that Jamaica is, a tourist country. Outside of the city of Port au Prince it is difficult to find lodging and when one does find it it is not infrequently uncomfortable. Roads are few, dusty and often in bad repair and distances are great. The short spurs of railroad track lead nowhere anyone might conceivably wish to go. The language of the island is a patois—called Crèole—to which a knowledge of ordinary French gives little or no clue. Though courtesy is as universal as the most instinctively mannerly race of mankind can make it, some travellers are made uneasy in their spirits by the total absence, once one is away from the main streets of Port au Prince, the capital, of other whites.

Relatively few, therefore, of the many thousands who go among the Caribbees, ever see the most moving, the most profoundly rewarding spectacles that the West Indies afford—the ruined palace of King Christophe and his great Citadel upon the mountain top.

But they can be reached. The very trouble and enterprise that it takes to get to them are in themselves rewarding.

A few steamship lines stop at the northern port of Cap Haitien and make all arrangements for the trip. Otherwise one must drive overland from Port au Prince.

It is an all day journey. A start must be made in the early morning. The way, once one has left the huddled, grubby suburbs of Port au Prince, lies over the great central plain of the island, through the sugar country. Barefoot Negro men and women throng the roads, trays and bundles of market stuff upon their heads, their bare feet dust-stained from the field; their liquid, rippling voices in incessant talk. Sometimes, if the manner of the passing traveller is not too distant and forbidding—and the Haitians are responsive to any hint of friendliness—they will call the gentle greeting "*Bon Jour, blanc!*"

One sees St. Marc, a port on the great bay that so deeply indents the island. It is a harsh bare town, ugly to the point of melodrama; then Gonaïves, a city of white walls, of vitality and dust. Beyond it is a desert, death-stricken, grotesque and beautiful with giant cactus. Then the way rises, the hills unfold and the air freshens.

The main road to Cap Haitien crosses many streams, some of them waterless dry beds that become savage, destructive torrents when the rains are heavy in the mountains far inland. The uplands are fertile. There are few forests, for men have lived and worked the land of Haiti for long years. For a time, before the descent begins toward the northern coast, the country has a cool and grassy spaciousness more reminiscent of New England than of the tropics. Then come glimpses of the sea—and Cap Haitien.

Cap Haitien—called Cap François in the French time—is the second city of the Republic and the main port along the

northern coast. It was burned by Henry Christophe at the time of the arrival of the expeditionary force that Napoleon sent out to hammer back the bonds of slavery, so it is not old. But a hundred years of rain and rot and sun within the tropics are an age and "the Cap" has warmth, color and the antique quality.

It is a sleepy place. There are not a dozen white men in the city. Doors are left open and the earthy, simple life of the Negro inhabitants flows out into the sunlit streets. The Haitians are wretchedly poor, yet it does not make them wretched. The drowsy heat of Cap Haitien has an undertone, like the buzz of bees, of talk and life and laughter.

The houses are rarely of more than two storeys. A few have narrow upstairs balconies with iron railings of delicate design. The rooms that give on them have no windows, but tall shuttered doors instead. Many dwellings are built round inner courts. A few neglected potted plants stand in the patios and they are shadowy and cool. The outer walls of the buildings of the Cap are kalsomined rose-pink, pale-blue, green, or mustard yellow. Mold and the touch of passers-by have stained them, given them added beauty.

Cap Haitien has no "monuments," there is nothing for a tourist to "see." But it has pervading and nostalgic charm. The wide bay by which it rests is beautiful, the sun is kind, the heavy rains when they have gone leave the air gold and luminous.

Milot, the tiny village where Henry Christophe, in the early years of the last century, built his Palace of Sans Souci, lies twenty miles away across the Plaine du Nord. Until comparatively recent years there was no way of reaching it from

the port except over a narrow mud trail by horseback. But today a road goes almost to the palace stairway.

Sans Souci stands at the end of a valley. The forest-covered hills rise immediately behind it. The upper storeys are nearly gone and the ruin is weedy, vine-hung and broken. But the years have not lessened its magnificence nor dimmed its pride.

The Palace of Sans Souci was the most regal structure ever raised in the new world. It was made of red brick and white marble. The ornate halls of state, the banqueting rooms and the royal library—the library of a King who could not read—were on a lower floor adjoining a wide, paved terrace. So that they might be always cool, in the heat of a tropic island, a mountain stream was conducted by pipes under the floors. It ran out through a red-tiled channel and fell down over a blue wall. Every one of many scores of rooms in Sans Souci was panelled in precious hardwoods and a few were paved in Eastern mosaics. On the walls were fine French tapestries, paintings from European dealers, and gilded mirrors in the fashion of Louis XIV.

In this palace the black King Christophe established a formal court. He conferred upon his Negro officers of state and army the titles of Duke and Chevalier and Baron. He established a strict and gracious etiquette. Henry did this not as an end but as a means—a means appropriate to his people that he hoped would win them to the end that he desired, pride; pride in the kingdom he had built them, pride, above all, in themselves.

Above Sans Souci, firm on the summit of a mountain three thousand feet above the level of the sea, commanding the deep

valleys and wide ranges, is the Citadel La Ferrière, built at the King's behest.

It is a colossal stone fortress, larger than the Tower of London. It rises from a bare peak four miles by steep trail beyond the valley of Milot. Mountain ponies take one up to it and for most of the way the great building is invisible behind the shoulders of the hills. At last, near it, yet still far below, the eyes lift and there, silent and solitary against the sky is a shape like a giant prow of stone. The immense fortress stretches back, covering the whole hill top. It was designed to garrison ten thousand men. There are great cisterns in its walls, long cannon galleries, with huge bronze cannon still at their places, with piles of rusting cannon balls beside them. Down broken stairways one gropes into dungeons and great storerooms below the level of the earth. In the center of the grass-grown courtyard, empty since King Henry died, is an unpretending, tiny shed of stone. It is his tomb.

The Citadel was to be a last defense against that dreaded time when the French might come back to attempt the reconquest of the rich land that they had lost during the slaves' rebellion. How useful it might have been, placed so far inland and so high among the hills, no one can tell for the test never came. . . . The Citadel's majesty and splendor have caused queer stories to grow up around it. Such a builder and such an edifice are of the very stuff, of course, of legends. But the ones they gabble in Haiti are strange in their ineptness. . . . They say Henry was a tyrant and that at terrible cost of life he forced his people to carry the stones from the valley up the steep trail for the construction of the fortress. But

there are no stones in the flat lowlands: the mountain itself is of stone and one may see where the materials were quarried close to the Citadel itself. The transport of the monster cannons and of the balls to load them was labor enough. But the path from Milot was wide in the King's time and they had mules as well as men. . . . They tell a tale that he murdered the architect of the Citadel, that once, in a moment of madness, the King marched a regiment of men to their death from the high parapet. There is no historic evidence of either act. Though Christophe loved power and had his way he hated waste. Those who have ruled Haiti since he died have not forgotten that Christophe was a slave and black, therefore the enemy of the free mulatto class who fought—at last successfully—to overthrow him. Christophe was great. Men sometimes tell ugly stories of greatness when it has passed.

Sans Souci and the Citadel are the everlasting proofs. The man's immortal spirit clings to them.

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Long years had past. Toussaint L'Ouverture, the liberator of Haiti and the first of the great Negro soldiers, was long since dead. "The Tiger," Jean Jacques Dessalines, who with Christophe had defeated the French armies, had ruled for a time as Emperor and had then been murdered. Christophe had formed his kingdom in the north, had given it order and prosperity. With the meager means he had both of men and things he had done magnificently well. But because he was a black and the champion of slaves the mulattoes in the Republic beyond his southern borders had resolved his magnificence must end. . . .

* Sir Home Riggs Popham, a distinguished English admiral, had visited Christophe's kingdom in the role of British Ambassador. The elderly, high-born sailor and the giant, brooding, sometimes savage Negro king had become fast friends. They had talked together many times. In the summer of 1820 Sir Home Popham came to Christophe's court to say goodbye. He was going home to England.

In the heat and silence of a weekday afternoon they climbed a hill together. They found a shaded rock from which one commanded a view of a widespread, fertile valley and the white houses of Henry's seaport capital twenty miles away. The titled British Admiral and the Negro sovereign sat down together and mopped the perspiration from their foreheads. For a few moments they were silent. The King's huge frame was curiously relaxed. He had grown heavier lately and furrows ran out from the corners of his eyes.

"They tell me, Henry," said the Admiral at last, "that you have turned tyrant. Why?"

Christophe's long-fingered, mobile hands opened in a gesture of helplessness. He spoke with measured, dull precision.

"Maybe I know no other way. Last night I learned that my French chaplain, the priest Corneille Brelle, was in correspondence with my enemies in the Republic to the south. Letters were found under his cassock. He has already told them how many soldiers I have and how many guns. He will lose his head at dawn tomorrow. . . . That is what you call tyranny?"

* The following pages are taken from "Black Majesty," by John W. Vandercook; published by Harper & Bros., N. Y.

The King drew in his breath and his voice took on more volume and a new richness.

"I know no other way, Sir Home. Though I am King, though they call me Majesty, you must remember I am an ignorant old man. I cannot read. What others have thought and done is no help to me, except what I learn of them through my friends. 'Christophe,' they say, 'is stupid. All he understands is war and work. He is no politician!' That is true. But in the time that remains to me I must do what I wish as I will. I have many enemies. Some down there," he pointed to the red roof of the Palace of Sans Souci, "would be frightened if they knew how well I know them. But do you see these?"

Two black clenched fists were thrust out and his eyes sought the Admiral's face. "My flatterers tell me I am King because of my brain,—because I know so much. That is nonsense! I am King because of these. So long as these are strong they will obey me and that is enough. When death opens this fist the work will be done. Haiti will be great, strong, rich, proud—so proud, God willing, the blacks will not forget the name Christophe!"

The King rose to his full height, held his hands out before him in a strange ecstasy.

"Come now, if you are rested. I have a commission which I would be obliged if you would fulfill for me in London."

That night Sir Home Popham took aboard his flagship a banded iron chest sealed with the royal seal of the kingdom. It contained six million dollars in gold to be deposited in the Bank of England in the name of the Queen, Marie-Louise Christophe.

At dawn the executioner struck off the head of the French priest Corneille Brelle.

Henry was absent all that day from his palace. In the late afternoon, as had become his invariable custom, he climbed the steep trail that led to the fortress on the mountain peak. Once there he granted only a curt nod to the Negro officers in charge of the garrison and retired to his private chamber.

After a little, as the twilight mists were scudding up from the sea and breaking softly against the great stone prow of the fortress, he came out, dressed in a dusty, ragged coat, torn knee breeches and a pair of battered boots.

The workmen were just coming down from the walls. The huge Citadel had been in process of building for sixteen years but it was not yet finished. Christophe took a mason's trowel from a Negro conscript laborer and mounted a ladder to a point on the highest rampart.

The soldiers of the garrison, the prisoners and laborers, ate their evening meal around little fires on the central parade ground, sheltered by the vast stone galleries of the fort. That night they talked in whispers and kept their eyes turned up to where the lonely figure of their King was silhouetted, a tiny mark against the luminous night sky. In childhood Christophe had learned the trade of stonemason. Often in recent months he had worked alone on the walls of his Citadel. The regular click-slap, click-slap of his trowel throwing mortar and tapping the big flat bricks came faintly down to them.

Three hours after sunset he flung down his trowel, retired to his room again, and changed to his customary ornate uniform. Then he let himself out of the studded oak door that gave on the lower terrace, and in a few moments the sentries

on the walls saw him far below them, striding down the moonlit trail to Sans Souci.

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The following day Henry gave orders that his meals were to be served to him in his private apartments. The solitary, brooding mood of yesterday still was on him.

At one o'clock he gave orders to a body-servant to saddle a horse. He was going to the village of Limonade, ten miles away, to attend mass.

The servant gaped stupidly. Never before in anyone's memory had Henry gone to mass. . . . The man hurried to the stables.

It was the hour when most of Haiti was indoors asleep. The vertical rays of the tropic sun pounded more and more relentlessly on one's back with every mile down the empty, dusty road. But Christophe rode without mercy, whipping his sweating white horse to a gallop that soon outdistanced the men of his bodyguard.

The Church of St. Anne at Limonade is a simple little building. It had rarely been visited by communicants more eminent than barefoot old Negresses.

The fat Breton priest who lived nearby was asleep in a hammock when a breathless soldier roused him with the news that the King awaited him in the empty church.

In a moment he was in a little anteroom that adjoins the sanctuary. A frightened peek through the door assured him that Christophe, whose giant body, tilted head, and outstretched hands seemed to fill the meager space by the altar, was waiting. The King was kneeling at a little praying stand.

With trembling hands the priest put on his vestments. In a minute he was ready. But so furious had been his haste that not a gust of breath was left in him. He paused in the doorway to recover himself. From where he stood he could see Christophe, but Christophe could not see him. Suddenly the fat priest's mouth dropped open and his little blue eyes nearly started from his head.

Christophe was slowly rising to his feet. His left hand clutched the *prie-dieu* so the wood cracked noisily. His right arm, rigid as an iron rod, was thrust out. His fingers pointed at the altar. Little flecks of foam were showing at the corners of his mouth. Now he was standing erect, a black giant in a queerly incongruous bright blue uniform. Frozen with fright, the priest realized Christophe was about to speak. His lips moved helplessly, then words were formed.

"Great God, it's Corneille Brelle!"

The King had seen the ghost of his dead chaplain officiating in strange silence before the altar. With a scream he crashed forward. In the fraction of a second before panic gave wings to the priest's heels he saw that the blow against the stone floor had laid Christophe's head open. As he fled he noted that the fallen King lay limp in an ever-widening red puddle.

Two hours later Christophe's friend and physician, Dr. Duncan Stewart, of Edinburgh—a white man who stood closer to the King than any men of his own race—the Queen and Henry's two devoted secretaries, Baron Vastey and Baron Dupuy, were at his bedside in the priest's house.

For two days Christophe lay unconscious while not a sound broke the summer quiet of Limonade. On the third day he was carried in a special litter to his Palace of Sans Souci.

The news ran over Haiti. The voices of black farmers carried it, calling from hillside to valley, over across the ranges, across the deserts, the great central plain, and at last into the dry brown hills of the South, where his mulatto enemies heard, rejoicing. At night the rumbling drums of old witch-men sounded the refrain, colored it, dramatized it weirdly, and sent the word in code over the marshes where the night birds called and across the narrow strips of sea to lonely little islands off the coast.

Christophe, lying in magnificence in the vast and splendid palace under the hill, heard, when night lay breathless on his kingdom, and his hands caught at the silken sheets. "So much to do . . . so little time." Then, weakly, he fell asleep.

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The next morning Baron Dupuy and Dr. Stewart came into the King's chamber. The leaded windows were open on a brilliant sky and a cool breeze from the sea fluttered the hangings.

Dupuy and Stewart seemed strangely ill at ease. With stiff awkwardness the doctor took his place at one side of the bed and Dupuy at the other.

"Come, Henry, let's get up," said the Scotsman, and held out his hand.

Christophe's arms lifted to them. He put his hands in theirs, raised his head a little . . . and cursed softly. With a force that nearly tumbled the two men over him he pulled at their arms. Slowly his great body came out from under the covers. His nightshirt, open at the throat, exposed his broad black

chest. His head turned toward Stewart and his eyes, wide and frightened, sought the doctor's.

"Duncan, what's the matter? I can't move!"

They let go his hands. Stewart flung back the bedclothes, and while Dupuy, his pale brown hands knotted desperately together, looked on, he went methodically over the limp body of the King.

At last: "You might as well know, Henry. Except for your head, your arms, and those hands of yours—and God only knows why he spared those—you are paralyzed. Know what that means?"

Christophe nodded.

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That night the hidden drums and the sing-song, wailing voices of the peasants carried new, exciting news.

Thick-lipped, dull-eyed blacks in the hot sweat of the cane fields spat on the ground and wondered. They arched their backs, yawned, then laughed. It would be good to rest.

And in St. Marc, the city of the kingdom that lay nearest the borders of the Republic, two officers of the garrison excused their regiment from duty for a week and entertained at their table officers of the enemy's army from over the line.

But the King, in spite of his infirmity, had rarely been more active. Four tall Negro soldiers of his household regiment were attached to his person. On fine days they carried him to a balcony that adjoined the rooms on the top floor of the palace. There, with a brass telescope beside him, he could see the richest region of his kingdom spread out like a pale green carpet below him. All day long messengers would ride up the

twenty-mile white royal road that led to the port to bring him petitions, papers.

Vastey and Dupuy, his secretaries, were always within call.

Word came of the treason at St. Marc. Christophe called a Negro general to him, a man named Jean Claude, and instructed him to take a company of faithful men to the rebellious city.

But Jean Claude never reached St. Marc. He was shot through the throat that night less than ten leagues from the palace. He and his men had fallen into an ambush prepared by a company of revolutionists. They had come under cover of the thick forests that clothed the most inaccessible parts of the mountains to feel out the sentiment of their countrymen in the north. Messengers took the head of Jean Claude in a sack to Port au Prince, the southern capital, to prove to their friends in the Republic the "good faith" of the St. Marc garrison.

A frightened peasant came at dawn to the gates of Sans Souci. He was admitted and fell prone before Christophe's chair.

The man was panting from exhaustion and whimpering from fear, but his message was definite.

The soldiers from St. Marc had left their concealment and were marching on the public road. A few peasants had thrown down their tools and joined them. The cry was "*A bas le roi!*", free rum, no more work—and spoils. They were moving slowly on Sans Souci, and no one was resisting them.

Christophe's hands caught the chair arms and with a great effort he lifted himself up. But he sank back groaning and his eyes stared terribly while two servants lifted and pushed him

to a natural position on his throne. The kingdom was toppling about his head and the King was more helpless than a newborn calf. Timorously his eyes sought the massive hands lying on his lap and for an instant a grim smile wiped the heavy tragedy from his mouth.

He called for his secretary. "Vastey," said the King, "we have no time to lose. Send word that I will review the army tomorrow at ten o'clock."

. . . . . .

Among the underservants at Sans Souci was an old black man, born in Africa, who professed to be a witchdoctor. . . . At daybreak this man was brought to the King's bedchamber.

For two hours the witchman, aided by a valet, massaged Henry's body with a mixture of red pepper and raw rum—a liniment held in great esteem in the old slave days. At nine o'clock they dressed him in his most splendid blue and white and gold uniform and at ten his four bodyguards propped him in a throne-like chair and carried him down the stairs and out on to the main terrace at the western end of the palace.

Below, filling the narrow valley under Sans Souci and stretching away into the humid distance, were the assembled regiments of the army of Haiti, their rich and vivid uniforms glinting brightly in the morning sun. Certain companies were missing, but it was a lack no one spoke of.

Every eye was turned toward the palace. Half the army saw the King's chair being carried to its place on the terrace. Five thousand blacks could hear Christophe's booming, roaring voice break the silence.

"Bring me my horse!" he called.

It was the first sound he had uttered that day.

The white horse, fully caparisoned, was waiting behind a wall. In a complete and breathless quiet a groom led it across the terrace toward Henry's throne.

At sight of it a vast shouting smashed the silence. With a single voice the army cheered "*Vive le roi! Vive l'homme Christophe!*" Down the valley thousands of hats were flung in the air. The hoarse, gigantic shouting beat against the mountains and rolled back in thundering echoes.

The horse came to a stand ten feet from the throne. The four bodyguards turned toward the King. He shook his head and swept them away with his arm. He twitched off the robe that covered him.

Doctor Stewart, standing in the crowd, pulled at his clean-shaven chin and stared.

Christophe looked straight before him. He breathed deep. The cheering suddenly ceased. Christophe stood erect.

In five powerful headlong strides he reached the white horse. One hand went to its mane, the other to the saddle. He bent a little to leap up. But while the court and army looked on, King Christophe slowly, slowly, like an empty bag, slumped down till he lay under the horse's feet with his arms outstretched and his face against the earth. The strength so miraculously summoned for the instant had gone out of him.

Rain had fallen during the night. When Stewart, the Queen, Vastey and Dupuy picked him up his uniform was smeared with mud. Dry sobs were shaking him.

When they set him back on the throne the soldiers below cheered again, but this time the sound was scattered and half-

hearted. The Queen bit her lips. The gaping courtiers nearby noted with astonishment that sour, silent Dr. Stewart was smiling with a queer, proud smile, and that tears ran unashamed down his furrowed cheeks.

The King gave an order. A page ran down the grand stairway to where the first company of soldiers waited.

The parade began.

As each platoon passed the palace where Christophe sat the men broke into spontaneous cheers. "*Vive le roi! Vive l'homme Christophe!*"

Then, because twenty paces further on they reached the far end of the terrace, the line of marching men turned around a high garden wall that hid Christophe from their sight.

The review lasted several hours. Christophe sat upright and kept his hand rigidly at salute. But when a third of the procession had passed him two sorts of cheers sounded faintly in the valley.

As the soldiers passed him they called "*Vive l'homme Christophe!*"; as they passed around the corner of the wall out of sight of him they broke ranks and, all unconscious of the contrast, shouted: "*A bas le roi. Vive l'indépendence!*"

Each company had been touched by the revolution. "No more work" and "free rum" were tempting calls to rally to. They had come to the review drawn by a lingering dread and a lingering love for their King, for the man who had won them their freedom. But the master had crumpled into the mud, and though when his eyes were on them they stayed in stiff parade, once out of his sight they were quit of him.

At last the tail of the procession, still meek, but now not cheering, passed, and Christophe turned his head to find that

the nobles, the generals, the servants, ladies and gentlemen in waiting who had grouped behind his throne in the morning, had quietly slipped away. Except for the few who stood close to him he was alone.

The valet and the witchdoctor; his two devoted secretaries, Vastey and Dupuy; the Scotch physician; his own three children, Prince Victor Henry and the two princesses, Améthiste and Athénaire; three old, erect black generals; and Marie-Louise, his gentle, simple Queen, were there beside him. A stone's throw away was the Palace of Sans Souci, its doorways empty and its leaded windows swinging wide. Evidently the last of its servants and sentries had gone away.

The King lifted his hands helplessly to them and they carried him through the echoing, silent palace up to his balcony.

They brought him his battered brass telescope. He sent one of the three remaining faithful generals down the royal road to find out the progress of the rebellion and bring the report back.

Athénaire and Améthiste, his daughters, one twenty and the other twenty-two, sat on the ground and laid their cheeks against his knees. He sent the others away.

He saw the solitary general, who somewhere had found a rich, brocaded banner, ride proudly down the wide white road toward the port. The old Negro went as if a great army followed close behind him. Two hours later, in the twilight, he came back. A rebel sniper had shot off his cocked hat and he had lost his banner. He was still alone.

Christophe sent his daughters away and asked for Dr. Stewart. The sun sank below the faraway rim of the sea and the night rode swiftly up the hills. Soon the valley under Sans

Souci was dark and murmurous. The sunlight touched the mountain peaks and then was gone.

The Scotch doctor sat on a stiff chair beside the King. They had been friends so long talk was superfluous.

Once Henry whispered: "Toussaint, the Tiger, and I . . . we dreamt so much and we have done so little."

Again, with a certain rich pride in his tone, he said: "To be great, Duncan, is to be lonely. To be magnificent is to have men hate you."

. . . . . .

The sky was filled with the reflection of flames. The King's chateaux in the distant plain were on fire. Through the brass telescope one could see little dancing shadows pass before the pyres of flame. Now and then an isolated shot, a sound of distant cheering, and a brief, mad rumble on a tom-tom drum came up to them. Christophe cleared his throat.

"Duncan, they will be here soon now. You must go. There are still horses in the stables, I think. Take whatever you can find that's worth anything, then go by back trails to the coast. You will be safe with the English Consul. Goodbye."

"Henry," said Dr. Stewart, "don't be a damn fool."

He stood up. "I am going to send Marie-Louise and the children to you, but I will be over in the hall if you want me."

They shook hands.

The Queen and the King's three children came to him. He then sent for his secretaries, Vastey and Dupuy. He said goodbye to them all; gave, in something of his old tone of command, orders that the two men were to take his family at once to the port and put them under the protection of Eng-

lish friends there. He gave Marie-Louise the papers that entitled her to the fortune Sir Home Popham had deposited in the Bank of England for her. Then he kissed them and sent them away.

When they had gone he called his valet and asked him to bring a bowl of water. While the man stood by, he slowly washed his hands and dried them on a damask napkin. Then he sent the man away.

But the man stayed outside the door of the King's bedchamber and watched through the keyhole.

He saw Christophe, after a long, quiet minute, throw himself off his chair and with clutching fingers drag himself across the room to a closet. He saw him reach up and turn the knob, saw him pull down a snow-white satin gown, roll himself into it, and then, like some stricken animal, drag himself horribly across the room to his bed and lift himself onto it.

From where he lay Christophe could look down the valley. It was not empty now. It was filled with a shouting, running mob of men carrying torches.

The King took something from a little cabinet by his bedside. While the trembling valet still peered hypnotized through the keyhole watching him, he fell back and lay still. A tall clock in the corridor ticked regularly.

Running feet sounded on the stairways. The first of the looting rebels were already in the palace.

A great crash of broken glass was heard.

"They are breaking even the mirrors that have imaged me," said the King aloud.

He clenched his left fist and raised his right hand, which held a pistol, to his temple.

A shot reverberated, followed by sudden quiet. The King was dead. He had put a golden bullet, moulded long before, through his brain.

. . . . . .

Marie-Louise and the others disobeyed the King's command. They gave gold and jewels to the looters to bribe them not to mutilate his body. They tied sheets to two poles and laid Christophe's body on the improvised stretcher, and at midnight the Queen, the two princesses, and little, fierce old Baron Vastey left Sans Souci by a secret door and started up the long, dark trail that led to Henry's Citadel.

The dead King was a heavy load; doubly heavy for one old man, an old Negress and two young girls, all heartbroken.

But all that night they labored up the trail, while Stewart and Dupuy and the three generals rode with Prince Victor toward safety and the sea.

Dawn found the cortège on the last half-mile of the winding trail that snakes over bare ground just under the grey walls of the fortress. As the night mists rose and broke against the prow of the foremost rampart the sentries on the wall saw them. No news had come to them up there. The sudden shout resounded, "*Le roi est mort!*" The sentries left their posts, the laborers and soldiers who were forming lines for the morning parade took up the shout, ran down the corridors behind the cannons and burst out the lower door.

A handful of officers and men tried vainly to stem the tide. But when the Queen and Vastey with their burden ended the climb and came under the portals of the fortress the Citadel

was empty and the hillsides were alive with running, laughing men on their way to join the rebels in the valley.

Slowly, panting and weak from exhaustion, they staggered through the galleries and came at last into the sudden brightness of the central court. The morning was cool. Green parrots flew cawing overhead.

The few faithful soldiers and officers who had stayed behind came to attention. Willing hands reached out and took the heavy stretcher.

Vastey and the Governor of the Citadel entered into a quick whispered consultation. There was no time. The Queen and the Princesses must be rushed to safety.

A pit of new-mixed builder's lime lay open in the center of the parade ground. Vastey and the Governor lifted the stretcher high over their heads and with a tremendous effort turned it over.

The King's body pitched from its winding sheet, turned in the air, and with a sullen splash fell into the lime. It sank down and the white corrosive lipped in on it like a hungry mouth. The bystanders caught their breath. The surface of the lime was still and smooth. But above it, through it, thrust up the King's right hand and his bare black wrist. The hand was clenched. It seemed in death to be still masterful, still strong.

There was no time. They left him there.

In the empty, gigantic fortress on the mountain top the King's hand threatened the stillness and the morning sky. . . .

Such was the drama. The Citadel and Sans Souci are what is left of the stage where it was played.

The center of government shifted to Port au Prince and Haiti entered upon her long and troubled history as a unified state. During the nineteenth century one of her rulers was dubbed Emperor, a few were absolute dictators and many were generals. Some were men of great ability, some were mere thieving incompetents. Once, soon after the death of Christophe, the Haitian authority was extended by conquest over the whole of the island—an intrusion that the people of the Dominican Republic to the east have not yet forgiven.

All governments were alike in one particular. All benefits and privileges were withheld from ninety-eight per cent of the population. The innumerable revolutions were fought for changes of power, not principle. The countryside was ill-policed, there were no roads and few schools except for the children of the elite who lived near the capital.

The two million peasants of Haiti were left to their own devices. Sugar planting, so important to the economy of the country in the French time, rapidly diminished. Sugar was too strong a reminder of slavery, and sugar planting requires organization and capital. Coffee, more simply and casually grown, became the chief money crop of the isolated peasant farmers, and, since it was of a good bouquet and found a ready market in France, it soon rose to the position of Haiti's prime export.

But individual Haitian farmers have rarely, if ever, had more than a dollar or two all at once in their lives. The few coffee trees near the hovels on the hillsides have sufficed for an annual cotton dress, a pair of cheap trousers and a shirt and a little tobacco. The garden patch, tilled with the simplest

of implements, has been more important, for on that an average Haitian family depends for its living.

For pleasure there has been talk, gossip, the color that reflects from even the most simply cut life. For adventure and expression of the tamped-down forces of their natures there has been voodoo.

Voodoo in Haiti—to the intense annoyance of the educated upper classes—has been widely publicized; somewhat overdramatized. There is not the slightest doubt of its existence on the island, or that its practices and beliefs are widespread. But truth is sometimes less strange than fiction . . . not always.

Zombies, truly, are believed in, and there is no more fantastic myth upon the earth. Zombies are the dead arisen. . . .

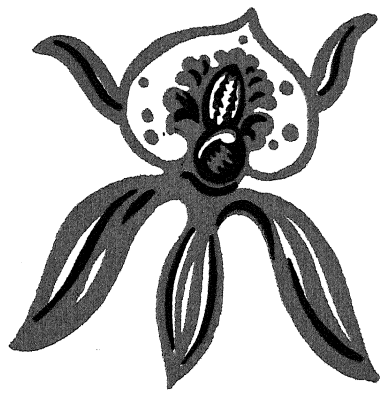
An old black woman with magic powers—so I was authoritatively informed some years ago—had a farm in the plains just north of Port au Prince. Being of a parsimonious nature she had recruited her field laborers from among the dead. Anyone who saw them—stumbling in speech, blank of eye and grey of skin—could tell that her hired hands were zombies. What tricks of mystery she had used to raise them from their tombs of course only experts knew. . . .

Zombies exist much like the living. Though they are vague and docile they both eat and sleep. They do not know that they are dead. But they must eat no salt.

The husband of the old woman, who was of simpler calibre than she, did not it seems fully understand the situation. Once, though he had had his instructions, because they whimpered for it, he salted the food of the beings who worked the farm. The instant they tasted it the zombies knew that they were dead. At once they set up a great wailing and be-

gan to run. The direction of their flight was definite. They were bound for the graves from which they had been stolen, in a cemetery just at the edge of Port au Prince.

The news spread like wildfire. The zombies had taken to the main highway that leads into town. People saw them and began running after them. Soon a great crowd was following. The wild hubbub and clamour that they made attracted others and yet others.



The distance was several miles, so by the time the zombies —freed from second life by the taste of salt—reached their destination in the cemetery there were thousands to see. . . . Each dead-alive, it is recorded, found his own empty grave, and falling on it straightway died. . . .

. . . . . .

But such spectacular voodoo is rare. One always seems to have the bad fortune to miss it.

My own two small "experiences" were, I fear, more common.

Once when I was in Port au Prince I heard that a voodoo

priest who had been arrested the night before was in a cell in the jail down in the middle of town. He was extremely indignant at his arrest—for he was a priest of eminence—and had loudly assured the American Marine officers that they could not hold him. At exactly noon, he had sworn he would vanish from his cell, transform himself into a dog and run safely away; presumably reassembling himself into more useful shape later on at his convenience. It was a direct and interesting challenge.

I found—at 11:30—my Marine friends at the police station enjoying a mild case of nerves. Too completely silly, of course. . . . But a crowd, an utterly silent, tense crowd of at least a thousand town blacks had already gathered in the streets outside the jail. The voodoo-man, plainly corporeal, was sitting behind the bars of his cell, looking secretive and well pleased with himself.

I went outside and joined the crowd. They were hushed, alert. The breathing round me came with queer irregularity. We waited.

At noon a town clock somewhere struck. One . . . two . . . three. . . . The crowd was frozen still. On the dot of the twelfth stroke a cur dog darted from the open door of the police station, ran across the street and disappeared among the legs of the crowd!

My own reaction was a violent jump, but the Haitians around me let out their pent-up breath with a kind of amazed yet satisfied grunt. Almost at once the throng broke up, people turned and went upon their ways.

I went back into the police station—to find the voodoo man still sitting exactly where he had been before, behind the bars,

and the Marine officers in charge, very red in the face, contemplating the slaughter of a barefoot negro janitor who had chosen that one *à propos* moment to chivvy a stray pup out from under a chair with his broom. In other words, nothing had happened save a trifling coincidence. But I alone of the whole crowd had come back into the jail. No one else had questioned what seemed an obvious miracle. A reputable story, proven by eye-witnesses, had been born.

And once, with great difficulty, I succeeded in attending a voodoo ceremony. Five solemn colored men and two women were sitting at midnight on the floor of a little shack in a backyard in the outskirts of town. They were intent and serious and the occasion and the moods evoked by it were evidently of deep spiritual importance to them. But the altar round which they sat was a pile of three worn-out automobile tires with a candle in a tin can in the middle, their costumes were slightly grimy robes of white sheeting, and their chant was based on selections from the Catholic prayer book.

. . . It is merely to say that voodoo is not always extraordinary, nor always evil. It is a remembrance of Africa, a faith in other powers of good and evil than those that we accept, a deeper and more impassioned piety that overlies and underlies the conventional Roman Catholicism the Haitian poor folk ostensibly profess. . . .

Port au Prince today is a wide, hot city, vigorous and glaring. Like many other West Indian cities it offers few tangible objectives for the hurried traveller. An automobile drive through it reveals little except the dominant pile of the Cathedral in the middle of town, the imposing white National Capitol with the wide park of the Champs de Mars around it, and

"residental districts" of the near-magnificent villas of rich Haitians on the slopes above the city.

It is far more rewarding merely to walk and idle and not too impolitely stare.

In front of the Cathedral is an immense unshaded square where a perpetual market is held. From before daybreak until well into the blaze of afternoon the bare acres lying under the sun stir with kaleidoscopic life. It is the great market of Haiti in number of merchants and customers. Individual transactions are minute. Some travellers, observing that a Haitian market woman will haggle over a single yam—or even half a yam—and that she has made separate little piles of a dozen peanuts to sell for a fraction of a penny, find huge humor in the scene. The more sensitive, learning that the tiny bundle of produce that is the market woman's whole stock has been carried on her head from perhaps thirty miles away in the hills, and that she has walked through the night to reach the capital, see tragedy.

The Haitians themselves see neither. Life is hard, it is true. But it has always been hard. This is the way of things. The trip into town is weary, of course, and the centimes that it fetches are important. . . . I have seen, in the late afternoon when the market square was nearly empty, a black country-woman with some pitiful unsold vegetables still spread on the mat before her, with her worn hands pressed to her face and her body racked with sobs of desperation. . . . But the trip to market, too, is social. Talk, gossip, laughter rise from the thronged square like the hum of a mighty hive. The crowd is ragged, but the rags are of all the hues of the spectrum. Gleaming black skins and agile hands keep them vibrant and astir.

There are innumerable stores on the downtown streets, but one wonders at the storekeepers' patience, at what impulse ever urged them to be rentpayers. For sidewalk traders in their hundreds have so arrayed their competing goods by every doorway that entrance to the legitimate shops is practically impossible. Humanity and goods overflow into every road.

The wide white streets—Port au Prince is a clean, well-ordered city—are a bright congestion of slow-moving, honking cars, of two-wheeled carts, of little, plodding burros.

Those last, flop-eared, tiny, with eyes of obstinacy, humor and—one senses—far more intelligence than they have ever found it profitable to admit, are the classic means of Haitian transportation. Burros can find a living on a plot of earth almost too barren for a goat, they are strong beyond their stature, they understand their owners and are understood by them. A picture which fixes itself in all memories as peculiarly Haitian is that of a grey little burro on a crowded street, straw paniers filled with garden produce and ridden—always at a jaunty side-saddle—by a Negress in voluminous skirts, wearing a turban with a straw hat perched atop it and—inevitably—flat slippers dangling perilously as she rides from the tips of her bare toes.

. . . For those who are ever avid for scenery, who, justifiably, seek the coolness and relaxation of motoring after the heat and bedlam of a walk in Port au Prince, there is a drive to a residential resort called Pétionville in the mountains just above the city. In twenty minutes of climbing the temperature perceptibly drops, the air has the fresh tang of tropical altitudes, the city and the plain beyond it spread in a superb panorama. Farther still is a higher, cooler place of escape named

Kinscolt where the fatigued and prosperous go to escape the hubbub of the port.

Whether a white man stays a day or decade in Haiti he goes away tantalized. The Haitian scene is bright, open, obvious. Life is apparent, outwardly simple. But its simplicity and movement is that of a conjurer's hands. One has seen everything—yet nothing. Your attention has been caught, then subtly baffled.

You remember Haiti always. It is the most foreign and elusive of the countries of the Caribbees.

Not a dozen white men in the past full century have come even close to understanding it. The life of all but a fractional per cent of the Haitian people is the life of huts, of tiny villages, of isolated, peasant poverty. Their language is curious and they know no other. Strangers among them are suspect and unfamiliar. Their houses are crude and their food is simple. Single shacks and minute hill settlements are connected only by rough paths and communication between them is possible only by foot or on horse or donkey-back. So—alluringly at the very doorstep—Haiti remains largely a country for explorers rather than ordinary travellers, no matter how resolute or curious.

During much of the last century, much of Haiti was even mildly dangerous. There were no police—as there were no schools or roads or hospitals—outside of the cities and the countryside was often at the mercy of miserable, marauding bands of irregulars following in the train of equally irregular "Generals" and revolutionary pretenders to the Presidency. But since the much-discussed epoch of the Marines, order has been general.

The American Marine occupation of Haiti lasted—it seems hard to realize—over twenty years and was a source of endless debate. Grave, sometimes disastrous, mistakes were made and in the early days there was bloody guerilla warfare between the perfectly equipped Americans and ragged, pauper bands of Haitian irreconcilables—never a pretty picture. But before the time was up Haiti had benefitted hugely. The country was for the first time effectively policed and made safe for its common citizens. The minutely small Haitian upper class, who were most of them deeply and profitably concerned in politics, resented the intrusion bitterly and found the ear of the world attentive to their cries. The Haitian peasants—some ninety-eight per cent of the population—caring nothing for politics but much for its benefits when during the Occupation they were first introduced to them, were, by and large, deeply appreciative. But they were inarticulate, unorganized, and no one listened to their side.

Since the departure of the Marines there has come a changed attitude. It had begun forming long before they left, among even the upper class and particularly among its younger members. Now, though government is constant and orderly and again wholly their own, there is a tendency to look back upon the days of the Occupation with a growing sense of appreciation, with a kind of nostalgic regret. Much was done for Haiti then. There was money and competence and discipline—and great fairness. Sadly, they feel, much still remains. . . .

VI—"*REPUBLICA DOMINICANA*"

THAT matter of the name of the second-largest of the West Indian islands is a web of confusion. Some of the original Indians seemed to have called the whole island Haiti, others called it Quisqueya. Columbus named it Española and for years it was set down in the records by the variant Hispaniola. Santo Domingo was the name of the first city of the island, situated on the south coast. Now the Republic comprising the western third of the whole is called Haiti, and the very different republic occupying the other two-thrds is the Dominican Republic . . . Republica Dominicana, in local accents. And the whole island, when referred to as an island, is

called—practically anything. It is a geographical complication fraught with the deepest lack of interest.

For centuries it was the city men talked of, the city they dubbed *La Cuna*—"the cradle"—of the Caribbean adventure, so the city has always overshadowed the land.

Santo Domingo was the first permanent settlement established by white men in the new hemisphere. The one built of the wreckage of the *Santa Maria* on the north coast of Haiti and peopled by its castaways was quickly snuffed out—the dismayed aborigines' one effective move against the vast intrusion. Another Spanish effort at colonizing, still on the north coast of the island but farther east, in what is now Dominican territory, was shortly given up because the site was unhealthy. Both had been projects of the First Admiral and both had been cankered with the failure that so persistently tempered the Discoverer's successes. It remained for his brother to find the first firm holding ground in which to cast the anchor of the Spanish claim.

In the great scurrying of ships that characterized Columbus' populous Second Voyage some gold mines had been located near the island's south-central coast. Christopher thereupon instructed his brother Bartholomew to seek a town site "in close proximity."

A sluggish, shallow river, now called the Ozama, reaches the sea at a point some twenty miles from the place where the presumed mines had been discovered, and there, *faute de mieux*, Bartholomew landed. The site had none of the merits of Havana, of San Juan, or of innumerable other natural bays among the islands, but the south shore of Haiti has few in-

dentations. For the shallow-draught vessels of that day a river mouth served well enough.

The day of the ceremonious founding of the city was August 4, 1496. The day, by a fortuitous pun, was both a Sunday —*Domingo* in Spanish, and the saint's day of Domingo de Guzman, the twelfth century abbot who was founder of the Dominican Order. "Santo Domingo" therefore was inevitable.

They cleared the scrub and set up their first shelters on the low land near the river's mouth on the eastern bank. To judge from a complaint that comes across the centuries they had founded Spain's new world capital on a hill of stinging ants; ants, in the tropics, when one is wearing a full suit of armor don't bear thinking about. After six years of uncomfortable residence a hurricane obliterated all that had been built. So the Spaniards moved to better ground across the river. There, eternally, they stayed.

More clearly than in any other city of the Caribbean they have left there the marks of their great passing. From Santo Domingo stemmed the later conquests. By the river bank, now hedged by a concrete wall, still stands the colossal stump of a *ceiba* tree where Christopher's own ship was moored. His son was Governor of Santo Domingo and his grandchildren were born there. Balboa knew the town, and Cortez and Pisarro. Ponce de Lèon there won his Captaincy and once Drake took the city and looted it.

Santo Domingo was, par excellence, the tourist center of its age. Then, when the long lull came, the city and the nation that had formed behind it were forgotten. No one went there, no one left there. Few ships stopped by. Left in peace the

Dominican citizens applied themselves to dusty and perpetual war.

Latterly, under a rigorous regime, garbage and revolutions —both of which discouraged Santo Domingan sightseeing— have vanished. A few steamship lines have placed "R.D." on their itineraries and Pan-American Airways make it one of the regular stops on the West Indies-South America run. From being inaccessible and faintly perilous, Santo Domingo has become as easy of access as rum in Cuba; no more perilous— to a tourist—than Munich beer.

But it is really too bad about that accursed name. Now that we have all got it quite clear in our minds about Santo Domingo . . . there is no such place. Unless, since going to press some close friend has shot him, and an immense amount of erasure has been done, the Dominican capital now bears the name of the Republic's dictator-president, Trujillo: *Ciudad Trujillo*—Trujillo City.

Even its inhabitants find difficulty in remembering the change. Outsiders should be forgiven if they ignore it. . . .

Santo Domingo has a population of over seventy thousand —just enough on a warm and tropic island where people do not hurry back and forth very fast—to raise it to the status of a city. It is, quite literally, both the oldest and the newest on this side of the Atlantic. What the Conquerers built was done so strongly that much of it survives. There does not seem to have been a notable public structure of the great period that has not left at least some hummock of stones or a gold-toned standing wall. All casual habitations, all the tin-roofed and horrific edifices of man and his god of trade that had lasted over into or been replaced in the twentieth century were

demolished in a hurricane in 1930. All new buildings have been built since then.

Until that year the ship of the Dominican state had yawed and slatted without course or destination.

By the end of the sixteenth century the center of the Conquest had moved west and the city on the Ozama had passed its greatest days. But the growth of a metropolis had drawn many settlers and a proportion had gone inland and established plantations. The Dominican Republic—then, of course, still a docile colony of Spain—is a country of great distances, of wide and sweeping plains, of mounting rugged hills, and sugar planting and cattle grazing, the dominant activities of the period, both called for vast estates. A peculiar way of life arose.

It was an existence almost uninfluenced by the factor of time. The Spanish planters, in comfortable great-houses in the center of their wide and drowsy lands, had many slaves and all the simple wealth that the island afforded. They were completely secure, completely isolated. Sometimes years would pass with no word from Europe, no intrusive contact from the larger world. A Dominican plantation master had his work, an ever-growing family, and as many concubines as he might choose from among the Negro and mulatto women who were his chattels. Immigration had ceased and though white stock predominated, it was gradually diluted as the generations passed. At present the population of 1,400,000 is apportioned in the census lists as forty per cent white, forty per cent mestizo, and twenty per cent colored—acceptable enough figures, but ones that would be most snortingly and violently questioned by a Kentucky colonel. Yet both breed and background were quite different from that of neighboring Haiti.

The Dominican planters were born, wedded, bedded and died. They rode their horses on the dusty roads and there were high-wheeled carriages for the women when the households of a district gathered for feasts or funerals. Time drifted by like the smoke of burning cane fields in the hush of windless tropic afternoons. Spain had given the colony little government but it had asked for none. There was little discontent.

The rebellion in Haiti that came with the French Revolution swept down upon them with the sudden violence of a hurricane. In Europe a defeated Spain had signed away the colony of Santo Domingo to France. The armies of the Negro General Toussaint L'Ouverture overran the country. With his death and changes of power in Haiti the Dominicans declared their independence, to have it crushed once more by the Haitian leader, General Boyer, who emerged after the death of Christophe. Black Haitian forces occupied the country then for more than twenty years. . . . Though the Haitians withdrew in 1844, the Dominican memory is long. Their hatred has a double base, that animosity for blacks that only tans can feel, and their sense of wounded Spanish pride.

The glorious independence of the Republic, after the final removal of the French and Haitians, was utterly inglorious. Revolutions were vicious and incessant. Dictator-presidents and Generalissimo-presidents were almost uniformly thieving and incompetent. "R.D.," by a series of descending spirals, deteriorated into a kind of cockpit of private wars. There was no closed season for a politician. Those who died in bed did it abroad.

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina became President in 1930, just eighteen days before the hurricane. Since the modern city,

indeed the whole of the Republic today is explicable only in terms of him, his record may be briefly set down. Due to his own efforts it is by no means clear.

Trujillo was born in 1891. He had never crossed the frontiers of his native country until he had become its ruler. His lineage, as given by himself, is of the utmost purity and eminence. Since under his absolute control no one may record any contrary opinion, one may believe it or not. His education was meager—though he clearly added to it. He entered the army and served in it during the period when it was dominated by the United States Marines—an interval in local affairs brought about by Dominican debt and chaos. Trujillo apparently admired them immensely. The government of his country, stewing more and more noisily in its own rank juice, conversely, deeply angered some iron quality in his own nature. . . . Trujillo, even if one grants him all vices, is an extraordinary man.

He rose in the army, became commander of the National Police. He was a worker, an icy and ruthless disciplinarian. National Police and National Army were made one. Trujillo became a General—and the army came to attention.

In the midst of even more than customary confusion Trujillo finally became President.

Theoretically the Dominican Republic is a constitutional democracy, a form of government that is always largely hypothetical in a country where there is widespread illiteracy, a pauper peasantry, and no prior experience of other types of government. Under Trujillo, "R.D." became an absolute dictatorship. He had the army and he had hammered it into an

obedient and useful weapon. He had a genius for sheer competence that was unique in his nation.

The great hurricane struck after President Trujillo had been in office a few days. Two thousand people in Santo Domingo were killed and some ten thousand injured. The capital city was a pile of broken rubble. Trujillo took immediate charge. By his order, since wholesale burial was impossible, a great pile of dead was formed in a public square, soaked in gasoline and burned. He passed decrees against speculation in necessities and rigorously enforced them.

A new city plan was worked out and an extraordinary work of rebuilding commenced. The General-President had many enemies. They vanished. The local press was whipped into whinnying agreement with him. Censorship was extended to every printing shop, soap box and pair of vocal chords in the land. His authority became complete and absolute. . . . One feels it was the world's good fortune that Rafael Trujillo was born on a small island.

Yet—within seven years Trujillo built from the ruins left by the hurricane one of the most gracious cities in all of Latin America. The massive stone buildings of the Spanish period have been meticulously preserved. Those that had left mere ruins have been left intact and planted round with little parks. The highways are wide and specklessly clean. There are no beggars and few conspicuous signs of poverty. There are streets of surprisingly large stores and cool, orderly corner cafés that appear to have been invaded to their nethermost by the new passion for sanitation. All that was once fly-blown, reeking and pestilential is now immaculate.

A miniature of the Washington monument stands at one

end of a waterfront parkway. It is true that there are few cars on the Avenida George Washington and even fewer pedestrians, but it is well designed, admirably executed. Behind it is a district of prosperous residences—none older than the 1930 hurricane—that in taste and appearance of solidity and wealth compare favorably with Los Angeles' rather less convincing suburbs.

The President has a son, who is a colonel in the Dominican Army and, I was assured, draws a colonel's pay. . . .

Colonel Ramfis Trujillo, having lately neared the top of his profession and the age of seven simultaneously, once, so it is said, expressed a desire for a public park where he and other children might play. Few fathers, faced by such a request, could do more than slap their son's head. But President Trujillo waved a wand, or gave an order, or whatever seemed necessary and in a mere matter of months Ramfis Park arose.

It is completely beautiful.

The plan is simple. Wide steps lead to a low, Spanish-style building with a flat roof. Through the building, part enclosed by its wings, is a big terrace with a few tables, below it a fountain that pours into a great wading pool. Beside the pool are playgrounds with swings, sandpiles, and the rest. But the design is exquisite. It is one of the most pleasing pieces of architectural planning I have seen in many years. Though traditional in outline, everything is touched with originality and taste.

Two playrooms inside the building were worked out by artists brought from Mexico. There is a bookcase in the form of lettered building blocks, a table charmingly painted with submarine imaginings, and chairs beside it in the shape of

animals. Ramfis Park would be delightful anywhere. In Ciudad Trujillo it is astonishing.

A huge harbor works is nearing completion. It has been badly needed for four hundred years. Well-laid macadamized roads have been extended to nearly every section of the country. Steel bridges span the many rivers. Hitherto nearly every highway in the Republic, when it was not impassable, was abominable. Most marvellous of all, the budget has been regularly balanced, foreign debt payments met on the dot. Graft —in a country with a completely corrupt habit—has been entirely eliminated. Schools have been built, and hospitals. Gains in every material direction have been enormous.

The Dominicans, it is true, have paid for this vast bounty with a complete sacrifice of personal liberty. But their memory of the troubled past is not a pleasant one. Superficially, at least in the capital, there are no indications of oppression. People are decently dressed and brisk. There is not an excessive number of policemen, and those that one sees are engaged chiefly in directing traffic.

I announced myself, on my arrival by plane, as a writer—a profession suspect in many countries. I had been warned that I would be shadowed, that my movements would be watched and probably curtailed. No one paid the slightest attention to me. I carried a small camera. It troubled no one. The one occasion when I had contact with officialdom—to obtain some sort of departure permit—was characterized by swift efficiency and courtesy. That subtle, so easily misinterpreted thing "atmosphere" had nothing in it that I could detect either of sadness or of evil.

Yet the amazing and greatly gifted Rafael Trujillo was

apparently responsible for one of the most spectacular, most thoroughly loathsome wholesale butcheries of all times and of all countries. And that as recently in this theoretically civilized age as the fall of 1937.

Apparently—for under his rule no one knows precisely. It is conceivable—though it strains reason—that President Trujillo's guilt in the Haitian massacres was negligible. But a dictator who has accepted credit for every constructive act in his country, who insists that under him obedience and discipline are absolute, who, moreover, makes it impossible for truth to be discovered by investigation, must to be consistent likewise accept all blame. That is justice. And justice is often truth.

This—admittedly a hodgepodge of whispers and rumors—is the story. It may be inaccurate in every detail. No one, probably, will ever know. That is the fitting punishment of censorship. Facts suppressed break out as legends. Legends, since man is an imaginative animal, are often more lurid than reality.

. . . The trouble began a hundred years ago when the Haitian armies, having overrun the whole island, took back with them their neighbors' everlasting hate. . . . The next move was in Cuba. In the nineteen-thirties, faced with the problem of unemployment, the Cuban government repatriated some fifty thousand Haitian sugar cane workers who had migrated there during the boom years. The Haitians, back in their own congested country, landless and still unemployed, began drifting—very much without passports—over the line into the underpopulated and more prosperous Dominican Republic.

The border, high among the forested mountains, is impossible to patrol. There were already several thousand Haitian blacks legitimately residing on the other side, so new arrivals were hard to detect. How many made the move it is impossible to estimate; enough, certainly, to aggravate an already existing irritation. Work in the Dominican Republic, despite the wonderful deeds of the dictator, was none too plentiful. The Haitians could live on little and they were regarded as of an alien and undesirable race. One can admit the existence of a problem. . . .

Then, say the whisperers, His Excellency Generalissimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo—a mask-faced, palely tan man with level, unrevealing eyes and a cold and steady mouth—dined one night with some officers of his army in a town not far from the frontier. The Haitian problem was discussed. And Trujillo—so the story runs—smiled and gestured and said there was one way in which the situation could be speedily improved. The more tolerant suggest that he was joking. But some of the officers who were with him took him seriously and the massacre of Haitians began that night. The weapon most widely used in their dispatch was the cane knife, or machete, a heavy blade and dull-edged when it comes to cutting flesh.

Details of course, are vague. The official Dominican name for it all is "a border incident" and the adjective "regrettable" is usually added. Informed rumor insists however that a careful and elaborately organized effort was made to kill every Haitian man, woman and child within the borders of the state; that the total of the murdered, before the incredible saturnalia of blood was done, was not less than twelve thousand!

Army trucks—I was informed—visited the shabby homes of Haitian families in the very heart of Ciudad Trujillo, in towns in the interior, in settlements in the remotest part of the island farthest from the border. Soldiers informed the Haitians, some of whom had lived in the Republic all their lives, that an order had come that they were to be repatriated. They would get at once into the waiting truck and be taken to the frontier. Their property would be collected and sent safely after them.

But the truck drove no farther than nearby fields, fields with high, stout fences. And when the corrals were packed with the living, with husky black cane hands, their thick lips grey with terror and their eyes rolling; with wailing old Negro women with gnarled, tired hands; with children with neat Topsy pigtails too confused to cry—when the corrals were filled—soldiers of the regular army of the Dominican Republic then entered and chopped them down with their machetes. When they had finished the bodies were piled into the trucks again and driven to great graves, or, if it was nearby, to the sea's edge, where they were pitchforked in. One courageous gossiper—within sight of the President's Palace—told me he had seen such trucks pass by; and that the drip of them was horrible.

That is not a legend found in some faded parchment manuscript of ancient, different days. This was in the year of Our Lord 1937—in a country of modern skills, and, one might have thought, of modern men. One regards such a record with a stare of unbelief. It could not, conceivably, have happened. The victims were pauper blacks. There had been no war, no

real cause for hate. Nor was it—wherever responsibility might lie—one man's deed. That, somehow, would be more bearable. But it was not, it could not have been. Hundreds, thousands even, must have helped; young men and middle-aged, fat men and thin, men with evil mouths, and men, some of them, with delusively kind eyes, good voices and smiles of ready greeting. Nor could it have happened in the lynch-fury of a single hour, or on a night when the gods were drunk and witches rode. Time must have passed, men must have anticipated what it was they were to do. . . .

So much for it. For factual proof, there was a drift of wounded back into Haiti over the frontier, people who had been hacked and had made their desperate escape, who somehow had been overlooked in the dark or the confusion of the shambles. There were many hundreds of them, so that for a time all nearby hospitals on the Haitian side overflowed. All the survivors told the same story of attack, of night raiding of single households, of the corrals, of the schemed and savage butchery. As for the Dominicans, they regret a "border incident." Some people near the frontier, they say, were provoked by the invasion of their land, a few Haitian peasants were undoubtedly killed. Though the Dominican Republic is sorry, it insists that nothing of great consequence happened . . . yet it has paid to the government of Haiti an indemnity of $750,000 . . . for nothing.

Such is the enigma. A charming, clean and gracious country, modern and amiable, striding forward, hard at work, hopeful of the future . . . an apple of perfect shape and rosy shine, rotten with maggots.

The past is more tangible.

Christopher Columbus' son Diego, son of the Portuguese lady who died as his dream was forming and before he left for Spain, had spent his early childhood as the charge of a Franciscan monastery, his later boyhood as a page at the court of Isabella. At his father's death Diego received the title of Admiral of the Indies. Not long after, because he had married Maria de Toledo, a daughter of the house of Alba, the greatest in Spain, he was given the more tangible post of Governor of the Indies. He reached Santo Domingo city in 1509 and remained there for fifteen years.

His house, roofless now, but still solid against all storms and clear in its outline, stands on a knoll just within the city gate as one approaches from the river port. Neat, round-headed little trees have been planted round it and the terrace before it has been set out as a garden. It is built with rigid stone solidity—it must have embarrassed more modern builders to see their efforts swept away by hurricane while unsupported walls four hundred years old stood firm. But the windows of the Casa Colon are many and large, the rooms are small and livable, the walls have not that gloomy, terrified massiveness of castles of the Middle Ages. Diego's house, for all its heaviness and absence of detail, is a house of the Renaissance. It is stalwart and abrupt and it has a certain colonial crudity to it. But one knows that it was habitable, human, that it knew hope and courage, that laughter sounded in it.

The Diego Columbuses must have made themselves quite comfortable. Seven children were born to them while they lived there. And in the house, during the long occupancy by

the family, two children died. As did Maria herself, years after her husband had gone back to Spain.

Wherever one goes in the modern city, with or without guidance, there are part-broken buildings of the period, all of them beautiful. Age, in the West Indies, has a curious way—I have seen the same effect nowhere else in the world—of coloring old stone a warm, rich gold, tinted here and there with rose.

In the middle of the city, on a quiet residential street not far from the Police Station and a group of government offices, is the splendid ruin of the Church of St. Nicholas, the first church of permanent construction to be erected in the new world.

At the top of a hill, overlooking the city and the sea beyond it, are what majestically remains of a great Franciscan church and monastery, begun soon after the settlement and finished in 1556. It is not as commonly seen or made as much of as some of the other contemporary relics, but it has, I thought, a stateliness and elegance that the rest do not possess. There are two exquisite doorways still intact, deeply recessed chapels under low, fine arches, walls enough to outline what must have been a magnificent outer courtyard. In those years the Castilian pride was high. They had come to stay. All was supremely right with the old world and the new. God was on their side, they would go on forever. The Franciscan Church on the hill of Ciudad Trujillo was of cathedral proportions. Except that neither the workmanship nor taste were to be found in such a place, it must once have aspired to rival Tarragona or Burgos.

The Cathedral itself, near a bronze statue of the Discoverer

and a pleasant, typically Latin-American paved park, is still intact and still in daily use. It contains what is beyond all reasonable doubt the authentic remains of Christopher Columbus.

Poor Christopher died in 1506, in Valladolid, in Spain. But his wanderings and buffetings by no means ended.

When he had returned from the failure and misery of his last, fourth voyage, Columbus' work was done and he knew it.

Somehow those great claims of his, that he and his heirs be viceroys forever, all he had labored so long to achieve and have set down in royal writing, were slipping through his hands. He had found new lands, more of them than he had promised . . . though his talk had perforce died down of the wonders of Cathay. But now they were tired of him, and forgetful of their promises. There were more glamorous travellers freshly home, young men of new adventures and old names. Columbus had never changed. His mystery was gone, he was old, he bored them now.

His patroness Isabella died. Though he had not recovered from the illness that had dogged him during the long year he was a castaway on Jamaica he went limping across Spain to see the King. Honors he must have. It was for that he had lived—that the sons of the weaver's son should be great forever. But the King had wearied. Those promises were so preposterous. Surely he had not taken them seriously. However, they would see . . . they would see.

But in Valladolid the old Discoverer died. He was buried first in the Franciscan church there. After a time they transferred his casket to the Carthusian monastery in Seville. Columbus' old sense of drama and of fitness had not left him, even at the last. He had asked that his bones be sent to rest in

añola, in the city that was the center of the world that he found. Spain intended that the wish be carried out. Other ıgs, however, intervened and years went by. Meanwhile, 526, his son Diego died and the casket was laid beside his ıer's.

'inally, in the fifteen-forties, the remains of both were sent to Santo Domingo and the two lead boxes were placed ler the stone flooring on the left of the Cathedral altar. The ıted burial seems to have created no great stir. There, ·cely remembered, they remained.

ı 1655, when the English naval expedition of Penn and ıables—the one that subsequently captured Jamaica—was ering outside the port, the then Archbishop ordered that corner where the two Columbuses rested be covered over h earth to prevent possible profanation, and that all guid-marks be rubbed out.

The work was done thoroughly and when the danger of glish invasion had passed it was not undone. The where-uts of the Discoverer's tomb became merely a tradition. t until 1795, when Santo Domingo was ceded to France, it again piously remembered.

There was then still extant a lineal descendant of the Ad-al, the Duke of Veraguas. He protested that the relics of distinguished ancestor could not be left to rest under an n flag. They should be taken to Havana, in Cuba. After Christopher had also discovered Cuba. There was a satis-:ory Cathedral there. Since the Duke had offered to pay expenses, permission was given and arrangements made.

When the ceremonious moment came there was nothing to le the official excavators to the right spot except the tradi-

tion that—from a position facing it—the casket (they had quite forgotten Diego) was at the left side of the altar. While a distinguished group looked on there was a tapping of shovels, and a hollow sound discovered. When the stone flags were raised they found under them some leaden plates that once had formed a casket and beside them some crumbling human bones. These, with accompanying dust, were placed in a new coffin and taken to Havana and placed in the Cathedral.

A long-needed restoration of the old Cathedral at Santo Domingo was begun in 1877. In the course of reconstruction workmen came again upon the vault from which the fragments had been taken and removed to Havana. But they noticed that it was not against the wall, that an unexplained space remained.

One morning another vault was found. In it was a leaden box. The Vicar of the Cathedral and a Spanish civil engineer were present and they immediately ordered the work arrested. The discovery was too important to be regarded carelessly. Witnesses were necessary so there could be no accusation of fraud.

For once there was no thought of *manaña*. Sentinels were stationed round the Cathedral and every dignitary in town was summoned. At four-thirty on the afternoon of the same day, in the presence of the President and Cabinet, the Archbishop, all foreign consuls, and everyone else of sufficient eminence to be admitted, the excavation was resumed.

What they had found proved to be a small lead casket, dull in color and heavily oxidized, but in good condition. On its hinged cover were incised the abbreviations:

D. DE LA A. PER. ATE.

This was interpreted to mean: "*Descubridor de la America. Primer Almirante.*" Two big Cs and an A were engraved on the box's sides and there was a further inscription inside the lid that was deciphered as "Illustrious and famous Baron Cristobal Colon." As for Christopher himself, he consisted of an incomplete assortment of human bones and some dust.

There was hell to pay. The discovery was dramatic and profoundly interesting. From the beginning there was no valid doubt of its entire authenticity. But Spain was furious. And the authorities of the Cathedral in Havana, who for nearly a century had been pointing with pride and genuflecting and collecting pennies in front of the wrong Columbus—for they had evidently drawn Diego—were apoplectic.

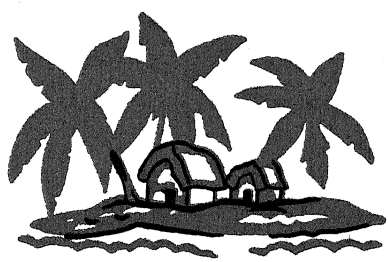
The Spanish consul had been among the original witnesses of the discovery. He was ordered by his home government to conduct a reinvestigation. He did so, and it turned up still more proofs. When, in complete honesty, he sent them in, he was recalled in disgrace and dismissed from the service.

The argument continued, amid a blizzard of papers, reports and accusations, for years, and it has still not wholly ceased. But nothing any longer keeps it alive except isolated examples of Cuban peevishness. They have Diego. Santo Domingo has Christopher.

The lead casket is now enclosed in a most elaborate bronze trunk and an Italianate white marble monument has been erected over it in the forepart of the old Cathedral. It is a monument from which one backs away in some alarm. It is towering. A marble lady sits on a double arch above the trunk

that contains Christopher. Above her, balanced on four precarious points, is a bronze figure holding an upraised cross. Angels, ornaments, aborigines and delicate flying buttresses intermingle in spidery confusion. One is afraid to sneeze near it, lest it come toppling like piled cards. What will happen to it some day when an earthquake gives it a good shaking is all too obvious. But by then perhaps even priests will have acquired some taste. . . . The Columbus mausoleum is not violently ugly. Its materials are expensive and the workmanship lavished on it was wonderfully expert. It is simply that it bears no relation to the fine old building where it stands and that it represents a fashion that has passed.

. . . There is more to the Dominican Republic, vastly more. It is one of the larger countries. But the years of revolution barred it from all mere pleasure seekers and even today it has no place for them and offers no earnest invitation. Happily, its mountains, its wide sugar plains and its long coasts are duplicated in essence in other places. The city is unique, the rest, except for the independently curious, dispensable.



VII — *PUERTO RICO*

AMERICANS have a prejudice against Puerto Rico. It is decreasing and will continue to decrease. But Puerto Rico comes under one of the headings of the negative American credo. "America," we assure each other, "knows nothing of colonization."

A great many colonial experts by no means agree. The development of distant possessions is so nice an art that entire success in it is no more possible than it is to write the final, perfect book. Colonization can be judged only comparatively. On that basis it is a plain fact that no colony of the British Empire has been developed more swiftly, fairly, and ably than

has American Hawaii. Nowhere in all of Polynesia have the French been as just or tactful as we have been in American Samoa. No intelligent native of the Philippines, no matter how anxious, for reasons of pride and race, he may be for independence, will deny that the archipelago has benefited more from forty years of rule by the United States than it had from three centuries of Spain. Nor in Puerto Rico have we done badly. There is no necessity to go far afield. One need but compare Puerto Rico with the nearby islands of Trinidad, Barbadoes, Jamaica or Guadeloupe.

The "problem" of Puerto Rico is all but insurmountable. A million, seven hundred thousand people live on a mountainous, nearly rectangular island a hundred miles long and forty miles wide. That is a population of nearly five hundred to the square mile. It has nearly doubled since 1900 and it is increasing two per cent each year. If there is galling poverty in Puerto Rico it is small wonder. That existence there is possible at all is extraordinary. That it is not only possible, but sometimes happy, and that despite its thronging people Puerto Rico remains beautiful, varied, and a place of strong attractions is a measure of success. I have talked to no Englishman who knew Puerto Rico and the other Caribbean islands who was not emphatic in his admiration.

My own first impression chanced to be one of extraordinary beauty. I flew down from the Dominican Republic and the plane was late. The long shadows of the dying afternoon lay over the pale green fields of cane of the big island. Faraway they were burning dry meadows and the long plumes of smoke were drifting low across the land. The sun behind us turned the sky a rusty, angry red and as it sank below the sea

the jungled hills that had replaced the sugar lands at the island's eastern tip grew black and terrifying. Puerto Rico lies only seventy miles away across the Mona Passage, but there were thick cloud banks over the sea and the sky became opaquely dark. The lighted plane seemed motionless, the passengers, idly turning over the pages of magazines or drowsing, detached from earth and time. Suddenly, over the Puerto Rican coast, the clouds ended. The plane thrust through them as through the parting of velvet curtains into a night of perfect clarity with a full moon high in the northeast. In its pale radiance the mountains of Puerto Rico were piled and magic shadows, the roads like running streams. The still pools of water in an area of marshland caught and threw upward repeated reflections of the moon.

The capital city of San Juan lies on an island that encloses a wide bay. The stone fortress of El Morro occupies the point that juts seaward and behind it is the modern city. Ponderously ancient, and spidery, sharply new, were washed alike in the magic silver silence of the moon. The older part of the town lay in shadow, the new was a maze of flickering electric signs, of moving automobile headlights, of brilliant lamps. Here, beautifully, was expressed the contrast of the island. Distance and the projectile speed of the great plane gave it remoteness and mystery. Neither quality in Puerto Rico is ever wholly dissipated, even by long acquaintance.

From the commoner approach by sea the consistently level summits of Puerto Rico's background of mountains make a dark band across the sky, fade into blue haze beyond the limits of sight both east and west. The common preconception of a "little island" is immediately altered. The mountains

that are visible from the sea are far inland. Before them is a wide coastal plain, part of the rich sugar lands that provide Puerto Rico with its chief source of revenue.

The El Morro promontory thrusts seaward. Around its base there is the eternal crash and spurt of surf and from it rises the guardian mass of the fortress, most effective of all the many that Spain built in the new world. As is usual among the islands time had colored the great stones in tones of rose and gold, but the structure has been so closely welded to the rocks of which it forms a part that it is difficult, even when a ship sails close beside it, to form an adequate impression of its true size. El Morro's look is deceitful . . . it has deceived even such gentlemen of judgment as Sir Francis Drake.

The channel that vessels follow into San Juan harbor parallels what remains of the old city walls. The surf washes them in many places. In others they stand back from a road that circles them at water level. The two major buildings that have survived from the early period stand conspicuously above the rampart—Casa Blanca, home of the heirs of Ponce de Leon, first governor of the island and now in its fifth century of use as an official residence, and La Fortaleza, now the office and residence of the American Governor-General.

La Fortaleza is painted a violent raspberry pink, the shiny, synthetic pink of melting ice cream. Nowhere but in the West Indies would it be bearable, nowhere but in Puerto Rico would it be somehow appropriate. In the older section of San Juan color is everywhere. Puerto Rico stands at the end of the line of Greater Antilles and the lesser islands bend south from it, so the steady trade winds that blow upon its northern coasts during most of the year come across two thousand

miles of open sea. They whip away all mist and greyness. In the winter months at least the sky is an intense azure blue hung with swift-sailing, fleecy clouds. Colors are intensified by light of brilliant clarity. The sea is the color of ground lapis—except where it shows acid green in shallow places by the shore. The confusion of old buildings on the hill are tinted through a wide range of pastel shades. La Fortaleza's pinkness is almost lost behind the scarlet of huge piles of poinsettias and hanging vines of cerise and purple bougainvillea.

Where the ship rounds a corner to enter the inner bay the picture abruptly changes. Age and stateliness vanish. Color remains, but it is the different, broken color of a modern city. Modern steamers lie in their slips beside covered wharfs, cargo booms swing against the sunlight, there is the clamor and scurry of a busy port. Ashore, in the blinding glare of a water-front street, trucks manoeuver angrily for place, congested motor traffic noisily tangles and untangles itself, trolley cars clang with headlong insistence through narrow streets. The imagined, expected tropic ports that are all drowse and sun and emptiness do exist down through the islands. San Juan is most actively not one of them.

The reputation that Puerto Rico has among travellers suffers from the violence of its impact. The island has great variety and offers a wide choice. Much of the interior is superbly beautiful and much of the island's life is calm, gracious and appealingly "foreign." Yet it is easily possible on arrival to be thrust into commonplace streets filled with too many people, to be made more conscious of taxicabs than of local taste, to be jostled into an impression of mere heat and crowds and

noise. All exist, but they are the preliminary scratching of the record before the melody is heard.

Because of sheer population one must have a more dogged attitude, bring to Puerto Rico a more resolute curiosity, a somewhat firmer open-mindedness. Then it becomes as satisfying as any of the islands. The period of endurance need not last long. If it can tide over a single hour it is often enough. The curdling moment in which there is born in a new arrival an unfair and unshakeable antagonism is often his very first. But four beggars and a postcard salesman shouldn't spoil the whole of what is more nation than island.

In San Juan one needs guidance, though not necessarily a guide. If, for example, a one-day-stopover voyager who disembarks at San Juan's waterfront turns right instead of left upon his first walk, all is lost. San Juan's 175,000 population spreads eastward through miles and miles of newer and newer districts, newer and newer suburbs and outer banlieues—more than enough of them to prostrate even the most hardy walker.

Straight ahead-and-then-bear-left gives a totally different impression. The old city on the western end of San Juan island is in all ways more interesting than to the right. Simply because it has been there longer it is richer by far in the authentic Puerto Rican atmosphere. One may cautiously savor it. If it leaves the least hint of fine flavor on the palate all is well. There is more.

An immediate and usually surprising impression is the color of the Puerto Ricans. Unlike the inhabitants of all the British and all the French islands, and far more than the Cubans, Puerto Ricans are predominantly white. Not many, truly, are what one might call glaringly white. The common Puerto

Rican type usually owes something, somewhere, to half-breed or quarter-breed inheritance, but Indian traits are more in evidence than black, and full-blooded Negroes are nearly as rare as they are in Boston. . . . The simple fact is that during the slave-running period Puerto Rico was a poor island. There was no money to buy slaves. So the strain remained basically Spanish.

The streets of San Juan are crowded. Some, in the old part of the city, are undeniably slummy and stray bits of garbage, despite the indignant efforts of the American government, certainly find their way into the gutters. But the people even in the most squalid parts of the town are shy and courteous, and, to attentive eyes, traces of the past are everywhere. Some of the iron grille-work of the balconies is fine, details of arched doorways, time-worn crests set in the walls, glimpses into the shaded secrecies of inner courtyards, are reminiscent of the long distant period that set the island's character.

San Felipe del Morro—universally called El Morro—lies up a hill and some distance beyond the old town. It today barracks a regiment of the United States army of Puerto Rican personnel. But barracking has always been El Morro's use and modern inhabitation has not changed it. The long, gradual slope by which one approaches the castle is a lawn of cropped green grass—nowadays a golf course for the use of the officers of the station.

It is, by the way, a highly extraordinary golf course. The simplest of the holes have the cliff's edge and the sea for hazard. Others play through moats and under and over bridges. And all have the full, cool force of the trade wind to give a ball an unpredictable trajectory.

The castle itself, massive—one can only realize its greatness when one stands within it—beyond even a modern's conception of giant building, produces an extraordinary impact upon the senses. The wind sweeps endlessly over it, beyond is the infinite blue sea. The walls, cut for the emplacement of cannon, are ponderously, incredibly thick. Even the most modern shells would make slow work of them. Stone stairways climb dangerously along the age-scarred walls, barred dungeons force their mood upon one with the suddenness of a hand at one's throat.

El Morro Castle was nearly three generations in the building. Puerto Rico, having revealed no rich deposits of gold, was one of the poor relations of the Spanish Empire and successive governor's pleas for funds, for armament and labor for the fort fell upon inattentive ears. But in 1595, a decade before construction was actually complete, El Morro met as grave a test as could be made of it.

Sir Francis Drake with a considerable fleet had come cruising through the West Indies on an errand of sheer belligerence. He had conquered the Invincible Armada in the Channel seven years before, but the war with Spain still dragged on and victory was empty, the king of Spain's beard insufficiently singed, so long as the West Indian islands were still held. They were weakly defended. They should be short work. Sir Francis had begun to feel invincible himself.

The immediate attraction of Puerto Rico was that a plate fleet with gold from Mexico had been driven by hurricane to take refuge in San Juan. There were two million pesos worth in silver and gold ingots in the vaults of La Fortaleza.

On a November morning Drake arrayed his fleet outside

the entrance to the bay, with execrable judgment, in range of the El Morro guns. A shot from the fort entered the Admiral's own flagship and smashed his dinner table as he sat at it. Two captains who sat with him were killed. Another ball, thanks to luck rather than good aim, killed the redoubtable old John Hawkins. Drake's ships moved farther out.

The following night, under the leadership of the commander himself, twenty-five small boats with fifty or sixty men in each came into the harbor under cover of darkness. The objectives of the raid were four Spanish ships of war that lay at anchor and it was Drake's purpose to burn them. . . . Sir Francis was having one of his bad days. As soon as he had fired one ship, the flaming of it, not unnaturally, made his flotilla immediately visible. The guns of El Morro crashed again. Nine English boats were sunk and four hundred men were killed. Drake, after another abortive attack, sailed away next day. It was his last battle. He died soon after.

La Fortaleza during its three hundred years of official occupancy has been so often modernized that, except for its immensely thick walls, not much proof of its antiquity remains. The American Governor lives on the upper floors and his office and those of his aides are on the lower ones. Yet callers are permitted to wander almost where they will. Nowhere more clearly than in the old palace does one sense the friendly, coöperative fashion in which America's most important insular possession is ruled. Here, evidently, is government that bases its authority upon consent.

Casa Blanca, the residence of the commander of the United States troops in Puerto Rico, has the distinction of being the oldest habitable building in the new world. It stands above a

shady, terraced garden. Both house and grounds have an air of aristocratic permanence.

The old churches of the city—San José, four hundred years old and still in use, and the Cathedral, that contains the tomb of Ponce de Leon—have been so whitewashed and refurbished and set about with the foul bad geegaws of modern ecclesiastical taste that little but the ponderous, fine lines of them is left.

A long boulevard that runs eastward is named, as are so many things on the island, after the great Ponce. Along it are the buildings of the new era, a Carnegie Library, the handsome Spanish Club, the Insular Capitol, the School of Tropical Medicine. Near the end of San Juan island is the Escambron beach, one of the finest bathing places in the American tropics.

A causeway connects San Juan island with the mainland. Beyond is the American suburb of Santurce and the Condado Hotel, the best and largest in Puerto Rico. . . . The cumulative effect is one of ever-accelerating activity, a metropolitanism as uniquely foreign and national as that of Havana. The language is Spanish, there is always something of the United States in the air so that one does not forget the relationship, but the basic quality is peculiarly Puerto Rican.

It is a quality that has been long a-forming. . . .

Puerto Rico was sighted during Columbus' second voyage. The flotilla of seventeen ships had come up from the south, sighted the island's southern coast and skirted it, then sailed up the western side. Only one brief stop was made, at a place called Aguadilla on the west coast. As the name conveys, a strong spring bubbles there and the fleet replenished its water. The customary formal prayers were read, the island was

claimed for Spain, and the fleet sailed on at once to Santo Domingo. The name San Juan Bautista was given it—a label that eventually attached itself to the city instead. No inhabitants had shown themselves. One may imagine with what wonder they had watched from hiding in the forests the little gilded ships upon that always empty sea. The date marked was November 19, 1493. The island had made little impression . . . except, apparently, upon one man.

A young soldier named Juan Ponce, of the province of Leon, was one among the number of that rabble of adventurers who had come with the Admiral upon his voyage. Ponce remained in Santo Domingo, attached himself to the military household of the Spanish Governor and rose at last to the post of Captain. Time passed. But Ponce had cherished the memory of the now half-forgotten island to the east. Fifteen years later he secured from the government ships and men so that he might go back and settle it. The expedition found again the place of the spring, then sailed along the northern coast until it reached what is now San Juan. The first sight of the rich harbor gave rise to the name the island has since borne.

It was soon learned that the island was inhabited, by a tribe called the Borinquens—as quickly learned that the Spaniards had nothing to fear from them.

The Borinquens were of the Arawak type, golden-skinned, short, strong, gentle of habit and mind. Their hair was lankly black and they wore it in a garish topknot tied above their foreheads. They painted themselves liberally with earth and vegetable colors in a grease base, they lived in raised huts of thatch and farmed root crops on the warm hillsides. They

smoked an aromatic weed in a pipe called a *tabaco*—and played a variety of handball in big courts with balls of resin.

There were not many in Juan Ponce's first expedition, but the white warriors who had black beards and breasts of gleaming steel, whose sticks shot death and whose god was gold were clearly—thought the Borinquens—creatures of the sky and so immortal. There was nothing for it but to do their bidding.

It was a harsh bidding. The chiefs of the Borinquens wore discs of gold around their necks as marks of rank. It was because gold was so rare on the island that it had been chosen for the kings' regalia. . . . But the Spaniards, because of the "tedious madness" that so haunted them, fancied it was more common than iron at home and set the unhappy Borinquens to the task of finding more of it. When they did not they were sometimes flogged until they died.

The miserable story was once more repeated. . . . The white men seemed strange gods, unlike the promise of the old, kind legends. The Borinquens were a simple people, but they were being enslaved and the weak were dying. An agnostic doubt arose.

Finally, in a spirit of timid, pious curiosity, some Borinquens tried an experiment. They were accompanying one of Ponce's men, a young soldier named Salcedo, through the mountains and they came to a river crossing. Half way across they caught his arms and forced him under and held him there until he drowned.

Indeed, whether god or mortal, Salcedo did look as if he were dead. But with these fierce beings from the sea one could not tell. Humble Indians should not jump at conclu-

sions. The experimenters arranged Salcedo's body formally by the river bank and remained in prayer beside it for three days. Three days—in the tropics—removed even the most skeptic doubt. The Indians had been deluded. The invaders, strange though they seemed, were human. They, even like the Borinquens, were subject to death.

The word spread, first wonderingly, then swiftly. The gods were but evil men and they were few. A rebellion against Ponce's band—they had formed their settlement at a place called Caparra on the mainland across the harbor from what is now San Juan—was quickly organized; violently, instantly crushed. The Caparra settlement numbered only one hundred twenty men, but they were disciplined, armed, and armored. The vastly outnumbering Borinquens were routed, hundreds of them slaughtered. . . . Within less than a century the last full-blooded member of the race was dead.

Puerto Rico did not prosper. As upon most of the islands, when the gold ran out, interest in the colony went with it. As time passed the more resolute departed. Only the humble and the poor and those who had grown tired remained. And always, of course, the half-castes, the children of Indian mothers and Spanish men, were left. The adventures farther on were not for them. But the soil they were bound to at least was partly theirs.

The life of the Puerto Rican settlers was not unduly hard. The earth gave lavishly and the climate, then as now, was admirable. . . . But they had come in the hope of instant fortunes and the dream was handed on. Sometimes rumors reached them. . . .

A Puerto Rican Governor wrote to the Spanish King in

1534: "There came a ship here from Peru to buy horses. The Captain related such wonderful things that the people became excited and even the oldest settlers wanted to leave. If I had not instantly ordered him away the island would have been deserted. I have imposed the death penalty on whosoever shall attempt to leave the island." . . . And later, when the restlessness continued, he wrote again: "Many, mad with the news from Peru, have secretly embarked. . . . I heard that some of them had obtained possession of a ship and I sent twenty horsemen by land. They resisted. Three were killed and others wounded. I ordered some to be flogged and cut off the feet of others. . . ."

One is not struck with the governor's intelligence. Colonists with no feet, one would think, would be bad colonists. But the mind of Spain is hard to enter. They had a taste for blood and pain. It has not yet been satiated.

Development was slow. Communication with Europe was rare, there was little external trade and therefore little money. Few black slaves were bought. Yet life drifted on. Sugar had been imported in the early days from the Canary Islands and whenever there were ships it found a rich market. Coffee throve in the mountains, tobacco on the cleared hillsides. And there was always fruit and food enough.

During the long period of intrusion of other powers among the West Indies Puerto Rico's times of peace were brief. But it so happened that periods of war were mercifully short. The freebooters raided, sometimes flotillas of Carib war canoes swept vengefully up from the lower islands to burn and murder. But though such things were harrowing they were incidents of days.

Ultimately all invaders were repelled. Doggedly the Puerto Rican colony held on. The population grew. There was little else to do. So it grew rapidly.

By the middle of the nineteenth century Puerto Rico had taken a fair rank in the world's market both as a producer and consumer. With growing self-reliance the ties binding the island to Spain began to weaken. The home government had repeatedly blundered. Puerto Rico's requests for greater autonomy grew more insistent. . . . The pattern was familiar. Privileges were granted, then clumsily withdrawn. Though the vigor of the Cuban revolutionary movement was never approached in Puerto Rico, Spain's grip was perceptibly slackening.

The war between the United States and Spain broke out in April, 1898. In May, Admiral Sampson's fleet bombarded San Juan harbor, then sailed away, having inflicted little damage. In midsummer an American force was landed on the Puerto Rican south coast. Its advance overland met with little resistance. No battle of any consequence was fought and there were few casualties. That was all. The American occupation was established in the autumn of the same year.

. . . . . .

The years since then have been comparatively undisturbed. Puerto Rico was not conquered. That fact was kept clear. From the beginning the scheme of the insular government has been consciously coöperative. There are today few official posts, important or unimportant, not held by Puerto Ricans. The development of a radical independence movement has so far been remarkable for the small number of its adherents. The

widely held opinion is that the advantages Puerto Rico derives from association with the United States outweigh any conceivable disadvantages. With the duty-free American market closed to her, Puerto Rico would go bankrupt. On the other hand, "advantages," from the purely economic point of view, are by no means one-sided. Despite its small size Puerto Rico ranks sixth among the United States' exterior markets. Close to $90,000,000 worth of American farm products—for the island by no means feeds itself—and manufactured goods are purchased by Puerto Rico annually.

. . . . . .

P. R. more than almost any other of the West Indies, improves with acquaintance. Many of them have a way of winning you instantly, of enveloping you with an immediate charm—then staling. On some of the smaller islands tourists during their first hour ashore habitually announce they are going to make So-and-So their lifelong home—then find themselves back aboard ship even before sailing time. So-and-So has suddenly run shallow and left them occupationless. . . . Puerto Rico is rather the reverse. Its small corps of enthusiasts are those who have stayed longest and know it best.

Puerto Rico has more than a thousand miles of good highways. A main road makes a circuit of the island; others, superbly engineered, wind through the high mountains. Most types of tropical landscape are somewhere represented.

There is one short trip out of San Juan that—if the weather is clear—is as worth while as any in the Caribbean. It may be made in a morning.

Near the eastern end of the island, in the Luquillo range, is

a great, forest-covered mountain called El Yunque—the Anvil. Fifteen thousand acres of peaks and upland valleys have been acquired by the insular government and established as a National Forest.

The road to El Yunque, after leaving the suburbs of San Juan, runs for a time through the coast plainlands. Most of the way is shaded by almond trees, gum trees, or the extraordinary flamboyant that in the summer months replaces its leaves with an incredible profusion of flame-red flowers. Then the road begins to climb among the foothills. The strong blue of the sea appears, widens to far horizons. Far to the east one can make out the vague shapes of offshore islands, dimly, at the very limit of sight, the Virgin Islands. Soon dark crags loom hugely up above. A silver waterfall shimmers down a black cliff. The air turns chill and greenly fragrant. . . . From the motor road foot trails run through the jungle to the highest summits.

All roads in Puerto Rico that strike inland soon reach the hills. Except for its ring of fertile coastal plains the whole island is mountainous. The views among them are magnificent, and they are always cool.

A highway across the island from San Juan to Guayama on the south coast—the round trip may be accomplished in a day—goes to the heart of the tobacco country, where cultivation has been carried to the top of every mountain, then winds its way among sheer, wooded summits. From each of the innumerable turnings new and extraordinary vistas open down the valleys. Along much of the way the roadsides are planted with flowers.

Flowers are something of a Puerto Rican specialty. Many

places in the tropics—indeed most—disappoint newcomers by the uniformity of greens and the absence of other colors. But Puerto Rico has reached that point in civilization where flowers are cared for consciously, and in such a climate nature responds with little urging. There are long flashing sequences of unimaginable brightness. . . . On the Guayama road there is a shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes in a gash in the mountain in as lovely a small garden as one may see anywhere.

In the west-central part of the island, in a remote section of the highest mountains that is very rarely visited—though it is only a day's journey from San Juan—is a region of as magnificently impressive scenery as any in the Caribbean. It lies—though the names are meaningless unless one makes the trip—between a town called Yauco, near the southern coast and a village in the hills named Maricao. It is the coffee country and the habitation of pure-blood Spanish peasants who have remained detached from the outer world for generations. They are lean, dark-haired, as proud in their poverty as nobles of Castile. They remain there in their fastness, some of them, all their lives through, never descending to the valleys.

Coffee is a forest product, coffee lands are perfumed woodlands. Too, coffee demands shade and to supply it the growers in these immense and Andean hills have planted a tree called *bocare*, a tall, pale-barked tree that during the months of winter bears instead of leaves an infinite profusion of red-orange flowers.

Whole mountains and deep-cleft jungled valleys blaze with them. One has reached a world of giant proportions, embellished with giant beauty. The air is sharp and clear, the sea, the heat and crowds of the coast forgotten. Here in the in-

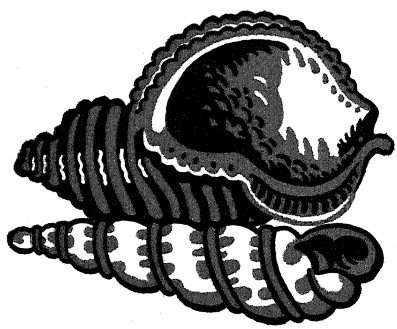
vulnerable protection of the ranges is a national character, set in an antique mode, traditional, unchanging. The impression is as clear, as memorable, as any that one might bring home from Italy or Syria. Puerto Rico is American. If it remains so—and the feeling is that it will—then the elasticity of the American scheme will have been superbly proven.

The lesser cities of the island have a superficial sameness. They are too thronged and flat to have an interest to ordinary travellers comparable to that of the rural districts of the island. Yet all have some objectives for the curious.

Ponce, the second city of Puerto Rico in size, has perhaps a more completely foreign atmosphere than any other community on the island. Ponce is as Spanish as Cadiz, and as self-consciously proud of it. One of those quiet intervals of journeying that somehow I remember well was an hour of evening spent in the light-strung plaza of the town, at ease on a cool stone bench, watching the strollers among the very bad white statues and round the fountain basin—and being politely viewed by them in turn, in the traditional Ponce style. . . . Mayaguez is the center of the Puerto Rican embroidery industry. In Guanica and a dozen other towns one may visit sugar mills and rum distilleries that rank among the finest in the world. . . .

Yet the intangibles are best. Some are visual—the shadow of yoked oxen at twilight on a road above the sea; the gallant set of a horseman's shoulders as he trots his pony over a wide field from which the cane has just been cut; the moist beauty and sadness in a baby's eyes, heritage of those forgotten tribesmen of the hills, now so long gone; the plummet-drop of a pelican among the surf-torn rocks beyond the Escambron.

. . . And that surprising, reassuring re-discovery, come to quickly in Puerto Rico, of men's common humanity, of the inherent friendliness—that asks but little invitation—that people of different race and background may discover in each other.



VIII — *THE VIRGIN ISLANDS*

PROBABLY more uninteresting jokes have been inscribed on postcards from the Virgin Islands than from any other place in the Caribbean. It is a somewhat puzzling name. But it derives not from any obstinate habit—or refusal to form a habit—of its inhabitants, but from one of Columbus' flights of fancy.

There are a great many of the Virgins. St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John belong to the United States, as do three smaller islands, closer to Puerto Rico, Vieques, Culebra and Culebrita. Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada and several others are British. Around all of them there are numerous lesser islets, rocks and quays. So, since each major island of the group

stands in sight of many others, they form a considerable host. . . . Columbus, sailing among them on his second voyage, found himself reminded of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins.

St. Ursula was the daughter of a third century British King. A neighboring king, it appears, wanted—euphemistically speaking—her hand, but Ursula, says legend, was sworn to pious maidenhood. Somehow she succeeded in winning her admirer's consent to a three-years' postponement. This interval she filled in by somewhat conspicuously surrounding herself with eleven thousand other virgins and going on a tour of Europe—of course a tour of holy purpose. The entire 11,001 of them sailed down the Rhine, then went from Switzerland to Rome on foot. On the way back, at Cologne, they were massacred by the Huns, presumably, in their conventional British way, regarding Death as Better. So Ursula was Sainted.

Why a great many blue, bare little islands ever reminded the Admiral of these maidens surpasses wonder. . . .

(Purely by the way, there is an odd variant of the origin of the name, a notable example of how history gets itself entangled by faulty mortal memories. The garbled story is that an English princess left Britain to be married to a pagan king and that 110 (note the dropping of the noughts) virgins accompanied her—*to the West Indies!* They were then captured by pirates who brought them to the islands since called Virgin!)

They are small islands; somehow, because of their very smallness charming by contrast with their bulkier neighbors to the west.

St. Thomas, that from the point of view of travellers looms largest among them, is only thirteen miles long and from a little more than a mile to something under four miles wide. On it is one town, a town that comes so close to being the only thing on the island that it requires no name. In the Danish times it was called Charlotte Amalia, but though the Danes are industrious, it must have seemed singularly wasteful to address letters to people at "Charlotte Amalia, St. Thomas, V. I." If they were on St. Thomas at all there was only one place they could possibly be. The name of the island was enough. So Charlotte Amalia was dropped. . . .

In St. Thomas—touristically speaking—there is nothing whatever to do, nothing whatever to see. Yet St. Thomas has a simplicity and charm that are peculiarly its own. St. Thomas summons from the past an almost forgotten word. It is a place for "gentlefolk." To enjoy it you must have resources in yourself, a taste for quietness and quiet beauty.

Swimming in St. Thomas is marvellously good, but the golf course is unremarkable. There are no formal gaieties, nothing is offered in the way of "entertainment." Nothing has ever happened on the island after dark more exciting than a game of contract. . . . Precisely for those reasons a small but increasing number of people make the fourteen hundred mile trip down from New York each season—people who are tired of cities, of the vagaries of the stock market, of themselves; people with books to read or perhaps a book to write; people who value rest, the sun, drowsy yet somehow fleeting days, and star-hung, magic nights.

One of the regular Caribbean steamship services from the United States stops there and St. Thomas is a way-point for

Pan American Airways, a mere exciting forty minutes from San Juan. . . . I saw it first from the deck of a small connecting steamer that once a week makes the overnight run from Puerto Rico.

I had waked early. It was still dark but the blue-purple of the night was paling. The cool, clear wind before the dawn was blowing. Soon the stars grew small and fine and drew away and the quick red sun came up. The scattered offshore islands were still and blue in the rose and emerald sea. There were no signs of life upon them nor upon the hillsides of the larger island farther on. Scrub forest covered them from the white ripple of surf at shoreline to the summits of the hills. No fields cut into them, there were none of the silent, sleeping shapes of little houses that one sees from a passing ship. Two tiny rowboats rigged with simple sails bobbed in the open sea at early-morning fishing. The steamer turned a headland and the town of St. Thomas gradually emerged from round the bend.

It stands at the side of a deepwater port sheltered on all sides by rising land. The town rides up and down three spurs of the big mountain that stands just behind it—three separate little hills that in the days of sail were labelled—(with as remote a resemblance as that of the islands to St. Ursula)—the fore-top, the main-top, and the mizzen-top. The houses of St. Thomas are prim and square, they are built without eaves and most of them have red roofs. Both from a distance and from close at hand they appear freshly scrubbed, too neat for real utility, like the toys of a serious-minded but somehow very winning child.

The sky above the mountain was rose-pink, streaked with

dissolving bands of mist. There were red flowers by some of the white houses, clumps of green coconuts near the shore, and by now the port was a bright and shining blue. . . . Other sleepy passengers had come out on deck. It was too early for conversation so most of them were silent. But all, as they saw St. Thomas in the dawn, were gently smiling.

Small steamers go alongside a coaling wharf a short five minutes' drive around the port from town. Grass begins a few yards beyond the gangplank. On it were waiting a few open Cars-for-hire. The few passengers (customs and immigration matters had been got through with on the deck so simply and quickly that I cannot really remember if there were any) put their bags in them and drove down the road.

The quiet black man who drove me chatted amiably in beautifully modulated English. In a few minutes he had deposited me and my bag in the big, bare upstairs parlor of the Hotel Grand in the middle of town. The fare had been little and there had been no clamor over it. . . . No one in the hotel was up, and there seemed no likelihood of anyone's getting up for some time.

On the washed, white streets a few people were beginning to appear. Nearly all were full-blooded Negroes, all looked as recently scrubbed as the streets they walked-in-the-middle-of, all seemed to have good manners, pleasant voices, and responsive smiles.

There is a tiny park in front of the hotel, just at the edge of the lapping bay. A green-painted shoeshine stand in a corner of it struck the only perceptible note of gloom. The shoeshiner, not yet on duty, in a moment of grave personal discouragement, had painted upon the base of the throne the

inscription: "*Love Is But a Failure.*" . . . One hoped, quite warmly, the lady would relent. Or improve.

The shutters were being taken down in front of the stores. A few St. Thomas shops have windows, arrayed with goods more useful than alluring. The places of business of the steamship agents, produce merchants, provisioners, and hardware dealers, merely have one or several big arched doors through which, even in the hot noons, not enough light can penetrate to dissipate the musty, pleasant gloom inside. . . . In a roofed market down the street black ladies in clean gingham and large straw hats were leisurely arranging bright-colored fruits and vegetables on cement tables. Others were engaged in the same occupation on the sidewalk outside under shading trees. The sun had just risen far enough above the mountain's edge so that it struck down in sloping shafts of golden light. A very small burro with one ear up and one ear down wandered unwatched around the market, then went sound asleep on some steps in the sun.

I had some small business to transact with a resident, so, since I was still homeless, I looked him up. I found his house by inquiry and wandered through an archway into his back garden. It consisted of a mango tree, some banana trees, and a few tall palms, close against crumbling old walls. Some flowers were growing in rusty tin cans. At the top of a flight of worn brick steps a barefoot colored girl received me with great friendliness, made no inquiry into my name or business, made me comfortable in an old-fashioned parlor, and left me. The Dane I had come to see was audibly having his bath not far away.

I was liking St. Thomas. It had scarcely been an adventur-

ous morning. I had seen nothing and done nothing worth the space it has taken to recount it. But somehow, gently and at once, I had been won.

Later the same day—if I may go on for another moment with this unexciting saga—I took a walk. It was a very lovely walk and when it was done I had come close to seeing all of St. Thomas—but nowhere near having done with it. That would take weeks, or months or years, dependent only on the state of one's ambition, or the call of other places.

. . . . . .

There is a theory in the tropics that "one must not walk." Ask "Why not?" and people look a little dazed. There is no reason under heaven not to.

Truly, one should never do it if one's clothes are prim and

valuable, or if there is no way to change them when the walk is done. For between nine and five if one goes briskly, clothes in the low latitudes do become an immediate ruin. But if one does not mind honest sweat and if the sun on one's head is recognized for the pleasant thing it is and by no means dreadful, a tropic walk may be immensely satisfying. . . . As to that matter of the sun: Over and over again one sees residents and tourists in the tropics one moment so convinced the sun is "dangerous" that they will toddle no more than a block or two in the shade and cling to parasols—the next quite peeled, lying on a blistering bathing beach. The tropical sun is singularly useful. One can do exactly as one likes in it—or contrariwise, use it as excuse for not doing whatever one doesn't like.

Atop the middle one of the three hills on which the town of St. Thomas stands is a ruined fort called Blackbeard's Castle because of a doubtful legend that the famous buccaneer "Blackbeard," John Teach, once lived in it with his comrades-in-piracy and some of his fourteen wives. The way up to it is part by a long flight of yellow brick steps, part by a winding, climbing road. With each step and pause for breath the view becomes wider, brighter. Beyond the old Castle, now cluttered round with modern houses, there is a country road that spirals upward to the saddle of the range above.

It was midmorning and none of St. Thomas' few automobiles were stirring. A Negro farmer ahead of me rode a plodding burro. The farmer appeared to be asleep, though he couldn't have been and kept his place. The burro, from long experience, had worked out a scientific method of hill climbing. He plodded in slow, methodical zigzags from one side of

the road to the other so as to reduce the angle. But he was making no great headway anyway, so I passed them.

My tie was by this time in a pocket, my collar was open and my wash suit was as drippingly wet as if I had taken a bath in it. As all tropical walkers must be, I was unlovely, but happy. . . . Of course, I *could* have driven.

At every resting place the gay spread of the town and sea below grows more arresting, more lifting to the heart. The view is so utterly unlike one's common and familiar world. The height of the hill behind it silences the town and gives it unreality. I can imagine no one so busy, so preoccupied, or so misanthropic that the clamber to the top of the St. Thomas range will not cleanse him from whatever mood he brought with him.

From the summit the view east and north is one of the most famous among the islands. There are no other towns. The green mountains sweep down gently to the sea. Far below is the precise, rectangular shape of Magen's Bay, rimmed with white sand beaches, with groves of coconuts behind them. The Bay is shallow enough so that its color is an unbelievable coppery green. Beyond, the blue shapes of a dozen other islands recede down the curve of sea. The arch of the sky is azure and infinitely high. It is the "windward side," so a breeze is always blowing. Fleecy clouds sail by.

St. Thomas has an inadequate rainfall, usually not over forty inches a year, and there are few streams or springs, so farming is difficult. The island people are of necessity town dwellers, dependent on the activities of the port for their livings—activities that in the past, when St. Thomas was a

coaling place and a transhipment market for the islands, were great, but now have diminished to almost nothing.

The few country people, even on so small an island, are detached and shy. From the saddle and first glimpse of the sea, a highroad runs west for several miles, then ends in a foot-trail arched over by the jungle. It is not a complicated route but there are a few forks and I several times inquired the way. . . . There was a young colored man with a donkey going to a spring, an ancient black lady in a turban with a huge hat surmounting it, a very small boy with perfectly round eyes. The unfamiliar spectacle of a dishevelled, hatless walker at high noon roused in them nothing but an old-fashioned, gentle courtesy—and a desire to chat quietly and long of life in general.

Several times in the hills rain clouds broke into showers as they blew past. But spreading trees gave shelter and the drops were delicate and warm. . . . The path runs close to the top of the range, then circles round a shoulder at the far end of the island and at last comes steeply down into the town again.

Such are the occupations for the idle on St. Thomas. There are a few formal swimming places with bath houses, innumerable others which one may discover for oneself and enjoy in privacy, using the nearby woods for dressing room. On privately discovered beaches, indeed, it is possible to sun-tan with complete thoroughness—with little nervous fear of interruption.

East from the port the hills lessen and there are a few rather dry cattle farms, and beyond them a broken, indented shore. The quiet is absolute. All day long there are no sounds but the lapping of the water, the occasional cry of a gull and the

drowsy, secret hum of sunny tropic land. . . . Dull, perhaps. But lovely.

The Government, at staggering expense, has built a hotel around the old tower of the fort called Bluebeard's Castle * on the hilltop east of the port. It is an unpretending place and it has as its prime attraction merely a stone terrace with a low wall around it. The town of St. Thomas lies below. At dusk one sits there, feet up and drink in hand, and watches the sun go down in glory in the west and the shifting colors of the harbor slowly darken. As the dusk gathers the lights in the little houses in the valley come on one by one and shine with gentle peace . . . and after dinner you come and sit again on the terrace and the velvet firmament is pricked with lucent, innumerable stars, or if there is a moon, the island is transformed into a breathless dream. By nine o'clock the lights in the windows below begin to disappear. . . . On Bluebeard's Castle terrace there is a chorus of suppressed and comfortable yawns, then murmured goodnights and emptiness again.

Such a place, clearly, is not for all tastes.

For through-passengers whose steamer's schedules do not permit of the leisurely sipping of so delicate a flavor, St. Thomian enterprise and the peculiarities of the custom's laws have provided other interests.

St. Thomas is one of the best places in the West Indies for shopping. A low rate of duty permits the sale, for example, of American cigarettes at sixty cents a carton. Famous whiskies and champagnes are priced at around $1.50 a bottle. French

* Built by the Danish government in 1689. The tale that a vague piratic figure named Bluebeard once occupied it unhappily seems to have no foundation in fact.

wines are eighty cents and there are several stores that stock every imaginable brand of imported perfumes at about half the price set on them in the United States. Too, there is an agreeable shop that stocks Jensen silver, Swedish modern glass and Copenhagen porcelain, and another fascinating one that deals in native handiwork, much of it beautifully executed.

Unfortunately, less ornate commodities in St. Thomas are not similarly low-priced. A winter visitor must pay for his living on a fairly luxurious scale. The charges at Bluebeard's Castle are about ten dollars a day, and the somewhat barely simple Grand down in the town charges five dollars. Nor are there those dear-little-cottages where one can live on a picturesque pittance.

Since everything in the Virgin islands from cement to tacks must be imported, a most ordinary little bungalow costs about six thousand dollars to build—with the result that hardly any have been built. Hopeful travellers who fetch along their typewriters, wives and babies, hoping to beat the civilized rent problem are apt, if they have not made inquiries in advance, not only to find Virgin Island life expensive but houses scarce to the point of non-existence.

A year or so ago an itinerant lady writer almost wrecked the island. They talk of her still with bitterness. She arrived, they recount, on a steamer in a state of advanced alcoholic gaiety. She was fetched by taxi as far as the terrace at Bluebeard's and there, busily attended by the barkeep, she remained for three days, enjoying St. Thomas more and more and more—or at least enjoying wherever it was she thought she was. She penetrated no further into the life of the island. She paid twelve dollars a day at Bluebeard's Hotel and on the

third day, as the proprietor put it, he "poured" her back onto a departing steamer. On reaching home she then wrote a lyric article for a popular magazine about the island paradise where a family could live in luxury for fifty dollars a month. Her readers have been showing up at intervals ever since—to be most bitterly disappointed.

St. Thomas, since oil-burners replaced steamers, and faster shipping schedules and different business methods took her trade from her, has been very poor. Wages therefore are low, but that does not materially lower the cost of a white man's scale of living. Everything but labor must be brought from afar and therefore paid for accordingly.

The Danes are a wary people. They did not sell the United States the three lustiest of the Virgins because they were profitable. Nor, in justice, did we buy them for that reason. . . .

The Spanish had at no time made any attempt to settle them. For a hundred and fifty years after their discovery the Virgins were forgotten. Carib Indians from more fertile islands farther south visited them occasionally and used them as a base for raids upon the white settlements in Puerto Rico, but there appear never to have been any permanent settlements. During the empty years marauding buccaneers occasionally found the deep port of St. Thomas useful for rendezvous and as a hiding place. The Danish settlement was established in 1666, first as a colony of the Crown and later under the control of a chartered company. Except for two comparatively short periods during which the islands were gobbled by Britain and soon disgorged, the Danish occupancy continued until 1917.

For a time the Virgin Islands produced sugar. How, on so

thin a soil and with so little rain, is rather puzzling. But those were the days of cheap slave labor and high sugar prices and the land was virgin too. Beet sugar and emancipation brought planting to an end, to be succeeded by an even more prosperous century when St. Thomas was the free port of the Caribbean.

The reasons for the American purchase of the islands in 1917 were military—or, more accurately, naval. Puerto Rico is literally in sight and the islet of Culebra between the two is the station for United States naval manoeuvers in the Caribbean. Denmark, heaven knew, was not going to lunge forth and conquer us from the hiding of St. Thomas harbor. But Denmark was a Foreign Power and the Great War was on. Since they were up for sale, they might have come into the hands of some less amiable neighbor. Twenty-five million dollars was the price we paid for them.

Not counting offshore rocks and some twenty diminutive islets, there are three of the American Virgins. St. John is behind St. Thomas to the east, a morning's run by launch, or, from nearest point to nearest point, an hour away by rowboat.

St. John more nearly approaches the romantic nation of a Desert Island than any bit of land in the Caribbean. It consists of twenty-one square miles of forest-covered hills and on it, happily, sleepily remote from the hubbub of a distant world, live less than a thousand Negroes and some half-a-dozen whites. There are no roads, no towns, no plantations more formal than tiny vegetable patches. The sole industry of St. John is the gathering of the leaves of the wild bay leaf tree to be sent to St. Thomas for the making of bay rum. There is no port, no steamers touch there. It is charming.

There are paths and a few horses so the few travellers who come to St. John can find mounts to take them through the woods. More birds have discovered St. John than mortals. Emerald-iridescent humming birds dart through the sunlight, gold-breasted little birds teeter cheerfully on twigs and cock their heads, notes and trills and caws sound in the warm green silence.

A very simple beach resort with a few cottages has recently been started on one of St. John's white sand bays and a few St. Thomians, an occasional American from Puerto Rico, and a handful of "winter people" have formed the St. John habit. They are a secretive, furtive crew. They have discovered St. John at considerable trouble, they adore it, and they sincerely hope no one else will hear of it. . . . They really would rather not talk about it. Their enthusiasm might be infectious and a stampede of enthusiasts could easily, they think, spoil everything.

St. Croix lies forty miles southeast of St. Thomas. It is the largest of the three American Virgin Islands and very different from the other two.

There is a one thousand feet mountain on St. Croix (they pronounce it Croy) but the surface of the island, unlike its neighbors forty miles away, is generally flat. St. Croix is hotter and a trifle wetter than the other two and it supports—or nearly does—some twenty thousand inhabitants. Its area is nearly three times that of St. Thomas.

St. Croix, in terms of political history, has had a more varied career than the less desired Virgins. Spain, France, England, Holland and Denmark tossed it back and forth among them-

selves for years and there was even a peculiar interregnum when it was a property of the Order of the Knights of Malta. Economically St. Croix has always been a "sugar island."

Ships stop at the western port of Frederiksted. They drop anchor in an open roadstead and cargo and passengers are ferried to a stone jetty in rowboats. The town is flat, dusty and hot from dawn till dusk. An old red fort named Frederik and a massive church are its only buildings of any pretension. Few white men are visible. But Frederiksted has an air of peace and permanence. Most of its houses are of a type that is part of the tradition of the sugar islands. They are made of boards, they are exactly square; enclosed and shuttered balconies overhang and shade the sidewalks under them. The majority are painted white, and even those that have been long neglected have been bleached to whiteness by the sun.

The streets of Frederiksted are too dusty to be precisely clean, but Denmark left a heritage of neatness behind her, and the Negroes of the town keep their cotton clothes and themselves far better washed than do most poor folk in larger cities. . . .

The island has the shape of a long wedge, five miles at its wide end and twenty-five miles long. The rather larger town of Christiansted, which is the capital, is sixteen miles away over a macadam road that is bordered much of its way with Royal palms. Most stoppers-over make the drive while their ship is in Frederiksted. The ride is pleasant and the town rather prettier than its neighbor.

The Virgin Islands have not been rich in Famous Sons. In St. Thomas they have even forgotten that the painter Camille Pissarro was born there—it is doubtful if they ever heard of

Camille Pissarro. But Alexander Hamilton spent much of his boyhood in St. Croix and that fact has been piously remembered.

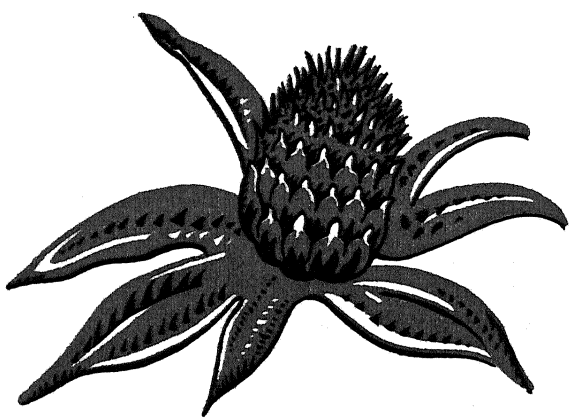
James Hamilton, Alexander's father, had come to St. Croix with Rachel Levine and their small son after a series of business failures on the British Island of Nevis, where Alexander was born. Rachel, who was a rarely lovely lady with reddish-blonde hair, grey eyes and milk-white skin, had been married when she was sixteen to a Dane named Levine whom she had soon come to dispise. She ran away from him after they had been married only a short time and she never went back to him. But divorce in those days was difficult, and of necessity Rachel's and James Hamilton's life together was without benefit of clergy. Rachel died after the small and badgered family had moved to St. Croix. . . . As a gracious gesture, Mrs. Gertrude Atherton—who spent some time in the West Indies when she was gathering material for her excellent fictionized life of Hamilton, "The Conqueror"—has had a monument erected over Rachel Levine's tomb at Grange, near Christiansted. . . .

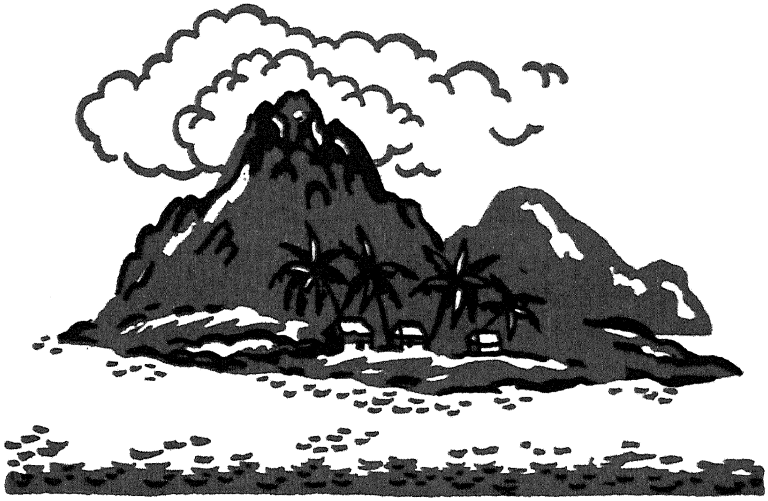
In his boyhood Alexander worked as a clerk in a warehouse and general store in Frederiksted, but in 1772 a hurricane blew down the town and the warehouse with it and Hamilton, at fifteen, sailed to Boston and a Yankee immortality. He never returned to the islands.

. . . . . .

St. Croix is at present the most hopeful, economically, of the Virgin Islands. The United States Government—the selfsame government that for eighteen years chivvied us and smelt

our breaths and was officially scandalized at the thought of alcohol!—has subsidized the Government House Rum factory. "Santa Cruz" rum was once one of the best in the world, the old formulae are being followed and with age and practice it is thought not unlikely that the red ink of the Virgin Islands deficit may soon be liberally diluted by it.





IX—*THE UNKNOWN ISLES*

THERE are a dozen or so islands near the top of the bend of the West Indies that, to all intents and purposes, are never visited. No big steamers ever touch at them and the little sailing schooners that sometimes go to them from the larger islands are irregular and slow. The islands bear up well in their privacy and few local patriots would be so reckless as to claim that passing voyagers miss much by their neglect. But the "unknown" isles show up over a ship's rail or, magically, under one from a plane, and they arouse curiosity.

Tortola, Gorda, Anegada, Sombrero, Saba, Anguilla, Barbuda, St. Eustatius, St. Bart's and St. Martin's all come at some time or other within the ken of one's field glasses. It is tantalizing for them to be no more than names.

The first three, that string west from St. Thomas and are in part visible from it, are the British Virgin Islands. All are populated by Negro peasants who get their livings by small farming, by growing a few patches of sugar cane, and by fishing. History and the white race have left them almost wholly undisturbed—and they have thrived on it. British Virgin Islanders have an excellent accent, charming manners, and they are among the most intelligent people of the West Indies. There is no employment on their hilly, rather barren little islands and therefore no unemployment. The islands have never been profitable so—what an ugly paradox it is—their inhabitants have never known real poverty. They become expert fishermen almost in babyhood and among the rocks and reefs and shoals that polka-dot that quarter of the sea they soon learn fine seamanship.

A few ambitious citizens of the British Virgins have sold their skill on larger ships and in busier places, but most of them go back. The wind is steady on the islands and they are cooler than many of the Indies. Serious sickness on them is a rarity. . . . They are a part of the British Leeward Islands Colony, but practically, since officials rarely visit them, they are almost without government. . . . There are many, many, many worse fates than being a free black peasant citizen of Tortola, Gorda, Anegada. . . .

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Sombrero—population five—lies some distance farther west and its often the first island to be sighted by a newcomer to the Caribbees. Sombrero is a flat, bare islet with a lighthouse on it that southbound ships pick up to check their course—the

first light to be sighted on many runs after leaving New York, so the isle is important beyond its size. The five attend the light and there is rumor of a goat. . . . Sombrero is so named because of its supposed resemblance to a Spanish hat. I have almost fallen overboard several times trying to detect the faintest resemblance. . . .

. . . . . .

Many vessels pass Saba almost within scraping distance. It is an extraordinary spectacle, an equally extraordinary place. A nearly round, verdure covered volcanic peak rises sheer from the sea to a height of 2,177 feet. Saba is majestic, rugged, beautiful with the strange beauty of a mediaeval fantasy, of some sombre dream. To such an island might the hero gods have come when the twilight of their passing turned to dusk; on Saba, surely, ages since, the Great Roc nested.

Saba belongs to Holland and is governed from the Dutch West Indian colonial headquarters on Curaçao. One reason Saba has few callers from the outer world is that it has no port, nor even a decent anchorage. The rare little government ships that come up from Curaçao lie off the leeward side in open sea and Saban sailors bring their boats out to meet them. Frequently, if the weather is rough, the steamer makes no attempt to stop. Mail and supplies can be dropped off next trip. The Sabans can wait. They are accustomed to it. They have been at it for several hundred years.

For Saba, unlikely though it is, is very much inhabited. It has three clean and comfortable towns and a white population that is slowly diminishing from fifteen hundred.

When the sea is relatively calm the landing is made in surf-

boats on a speck of rocky beach only a few yards in extent. On occasions it is a thoroughly wet and scary business. Above looms the vertical cliff of Saba—and a long, long climb.

The first village above, that nestles in the indentation of a burnt-out and fertile crater, is called—charmingly—Bottom. It is nine hundred feet above the shore, up a flight of steps! They are called "The Ladder" and they are cut and fashioned in the cliff in slabs wide enough so that a pony can manage them. Up "The Ladder" go all Saba's imports, and Saba's few visitors —most of the latter, since ponies are not numerous and must be arranged for in advance—on their own two weary legs.

It is a dizzy, an exhausting, an amazing climb. . . . On this eyrie, this beachless, portless precipice of a mountain, one is irritated to be told that the favorite profession of its men is that of sailors. It seems needlessly perverse of them. Parachuting would be more logical.

Bottom is cosy, Dutch, clean,—and preponderantly feminine. The Saba men, being sailors, have gone away. A presentable male stranger is regarded as manna from heaven. Windward Side, the next town, is three hundred feet higher, and St. John's, the third settlement, perches still higher at an elevation of two thousand feet. It is a sylvan, dreamy place. There are a few Negroes on the island, but there has been practically no racial crossing. Even more remarkable, the few white families, though they have of necessity intermarried, have not to any appreciable extent turned feeble minded. Slack mouths and wandering eyes are rare.

Potatoes grow with special ease on Saba and there is good grazing on the cloud-hung slopes. There is food enough and peace aplenty. The world is far away and unregretted. . . .

Happily for one's peace of mind, a Saban industry of the past has ceased. Saba used to export ships!

The Dutch delight in living under water, or on mountain peaks, in doing unlikely things. . . . Timbers in the dead crater, a thousand feet or more above sea level, were carpentered into fine, efficient little schooners. They were then hoisted to the edge of the precipice and lowered down by ropes!

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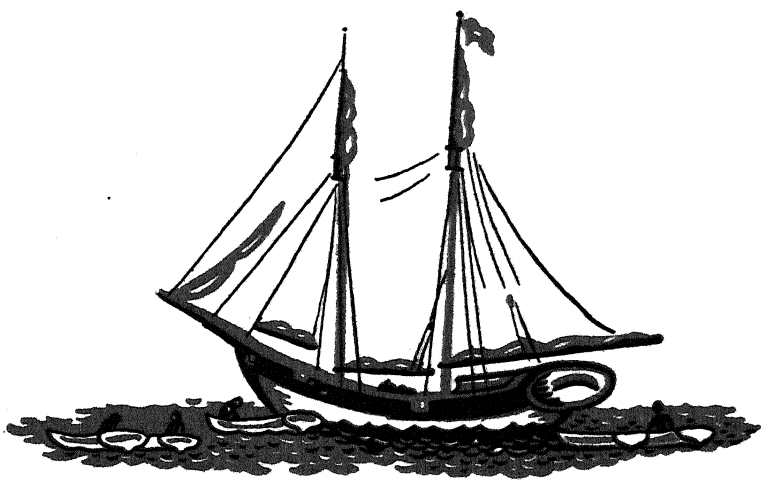
St. Eustatius, or "Statia" as it is familiarly called, is the next island that one comes to on the same steamer run on which



Saba is sighted. It is on the left. Rather, since all passengers after four days at sea have become heavily nautical, it is on the *port*. Statia from the sea is not remarkable. From the air, it causes as much neck-craning as any island spectacle on the whole spectacularly beautiful flight over the Caribbean.

A smallish, dark-green little island with two tiny towns clinging to its rocky shores rises at its southern end into a perfect volcanic cone. The sides of the mountain are as precisely sculptured as if they had been designed by a geological model-maker. The cone is neatly circular, its edges, from the height that one flies above them, look cutting sharp. The crater itself is black, filled with dark and uniform forest, so desolate-seeming that it is hard to escape the feeling that you peer into its sinister privacy for the first time since life began. In a moment Statia is gone. But never from memory.

St. Eustatius is Dutch and now it is an all but forgotten place. The language of its thousand-or-so Negro inhabitants is English and it is ruled over by a single lonely Dutch administrator. But once—as unbelievably as Saba's ships—Statia was one of the great ports of the world.

In several places in the world the Netherlanders, when they have found themselves in the possession of land that was of little use for agriculture, have had the acumen to turn the property into a market. This, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, they did on Statia, with astonishing success. The "Golden Rock," as it was called, became for a time the chief trading center of the West Indies. Sometimes as many as seven hundred ships lay in the Statia roads at one time. Great warehouses were built along the shore—the ruins of them are still there. St. Eustatius was a free port and during the American revolution war supplies of many kinds were brought there from Europe and transhipped to American vessels.

In 1781, during war between Holland and England, Rodney, Admiral of the British West Indian fleet, captured the

island—before its preoccupied inhabitants were even aware that a war had been declared. By the questionable device of leaving the Dutch flag flying at the masthead of the fort, Rodney drew other ships into his trap. All were taken, with their cargoes, and at last a gigantic auction was held—one of the greatest, so it is said, in the history of the world. At knock-down prices the Statia stores and captive ships brought $15,-000,000. . . . That auction spelled the end of it. Trade was never resumed and the port fell empty.

. . . . . .

St. Martin island lies off the regular steamship lanes and is rarely seen as more than a dim blob on the horizon. It is a political monstrosity. There are only thirty-eight square miles of St. Martin, yet two powers share it. France owns one end, Holland the other, but since St. Martin is a neglected, unprofitable island the two colonies exist side by side in complete amity. There is a dim story that long ago parties of Dutch and French settlers arrived simultaneously and rather than go at once to war, agreed to pace out their claims. A Dutchman and a Frenchman started back to back and set off along the beach to circle the island, agreeing that a line drawn from the starting place to the eventual meeting place would establish the frontier between them. To complete the pretty tale, it is said that the Dutchman, being of portlier build, walked more slowly and so won for his nation the lesser share. However, he had chosen to walk south round the more profitable end!

There are natural salt-ponds on St. Martin and some cattle and the inhabitants grow, besides food for themselves, a little cotton. The French town is called Marigot, the Dutch town

Phillipsburg. The Negro inhabitants, ignoring the tongues of both titular masters, speak English.

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Anguilla, close to St. Martin, and Barbuda, farther south and east, are part of the British Leeward Islands Colony. Both are low, flat coral islands with little good soil on them, but both support relatively large and self-sustaining populations.

On Anguilla's thirty-five square miles live over four thousand people, most of them, of course, black or colored. They are that happy rarity in the British West Indies, small proprietors. Their own garden crops are their first consideration, but they earn a small cash income sufficient for their needs by growing and exporting a fair crop of Sea Island cotton. Due to its very dryness and windiness Anguilla is extremely healthy. Independence, isolation, freedom from disease, and the struggle for existence have made the people of the island markedly intelligent.

Barbuda for many generations was one of these comfortable family estates that was managed by an overseer who sent its handsome dividends to heirs in England. Its inhabitants were therefore without benefit of taxes or regular government. Fish and lobsters are plentiful in the coral shallows round its shores and, surprisingly, a herd of wild deer ranges it. The sires and dames of the herd were imported long ago by the Barbuda proprietors. Occasionally resolute British sportsmen still make the trip there by schooner for a hunting holiday.

Saint Barthélemy, anglicized to St. Bartholomew, and usually called St. Bart's, is French and under the care of the

government of Guadeloupe. It has an area of only eight square miles and a proportionately tiny population. In the eighteenth century it had a brief hour as an important trading port, but time has drifted by it and left it to the sea and sun.

. . . . . .

. . . They form a various, curious garland. As Americans increasingly discover the Caribbean they may one day form a rewarding tour just in themselves. If American yachtsmen could ever bring themselves to go beyond permanent anchorage in Miami or Nassau, they would find among the unknown islands that the quality of remoteness may be discovered close at hand.

X—*THE LEEWARD ISLANDS*

GEOLOGICALLY the West Indian islands are the summits of a range of colossal mountains that ages ago rose from the Caribbean plain. Rhinoceri and mastadons once roamed them. An ambitious dinosaur might have walked dry-shod from Patagonia to Maine. But geological changes are always greatest near the equator—the whirling of the sphere sets up a centrifugal strain upon the earth's crust—and with the passing of the unimaginable eons the Caribbean plain sank down and the seas came in. The West Indies must once have excelled the Himalayas. The mountains in Haiti rise ten thousand feet above the sea; one of the great "deeps" of the ocean, north of Puerto Rico, is an abyss of twenty-seven thousand feet. Many of the West Indian mountains, too, that now are

tall must have been far higher before volcanic forces tore them down.

We are apt to think of the world as finished, of "geology" as something past. Earth changes are so slow and human life so brief we forget the earth may still be young, that growth and death still go on in it. It is a shock, if one comes from a quiet land, to smell the reek of fluid rock, to see the plumes above the vents of the internal fires, the symmetric shape of cones against the sky.

A volcano, even though it may have been long quiet, is like no other mountain. It is always somehow aloof and sinister. The effect is not a simple one inspired by fear—for one can no more feel conscious fear of a volcano than one can carry the dread that a tornado may at any moment strike from a clear sky. Yet they do induce a mood of sadness and a kind of hush. Sometimes it is the quality of beauty that they have, a perfection of form that is humbling, that sets them apart, that forbids the friendliness one feels for common hills.

From the Virgin Islands south almost all of the larger West Indian islands are of volcanic origin. Most have living proof that the fires beneath them are by no means dead.

St. Kitts—it is never called by its full name of St. Christopher—is the first of the clearly recognizable volcanic islands sighted on the southbound trip. . . . Once I saw it, with the still purer cone-shape of Nevis just beyond it, in the dawn with two perfect rainbows arching over them. I have seen St. Kitts at twilight and through the haze of silent noons. It is unforgettably beautiful. St. Kitts is the kind of island that a poetic child might imagine all islands of the tropic seas to be.

But the mood that it has always produced has been one of melancholy.

Three groups of dark, forest-covered mountains comprise its central range and all around them the land slopes smoothly, broadly down. The highest of the peaks, that ends in a great crater, and is but rarely seen behind its swirl of heavy rain clouds, is called Mount Misery.

It is part of the genius of the Negro race somehow to find peace of spirit under crushing adversity, to be able to put down the load and laugh beside the way. Because of that capacity the dusty cane fields below Mount Misery are by no means always shadowed by its mood. It is wonderful that they are not, for St. Kitts is, in truth, the least happy of the islands.

Over twenty thousand people live on St. Kitts—and three families substantially own it. Two-thirds of its cultivatable land are planted in sugar cane; sugar in recent years has been barely profitable; and cane fields give only seasonal employment. Few peasants have any land and the plantations leave so little acreage for provision farming that the island cannot feed itself. Great quantities of rice, salt fish, meat and flour must be imported—and in some manner paid for. The common black man of St. Kitts lives therefore in the most abject poverty, all too often within sight of grave and literal want.

A motor road that circles the island—the distance is thirty-one miles—goes through what, for want of boundary markers, appears to be one huge sugar estate. The provision fields and some acres of cotton are on the steeper slopes above.

Outside of Basseterre, the port town, the only settlements are tiny, shabby little villages at intervals along the shore. Their locations have been established in most cases by the

presence of some stream that flows down from the heights. Grey, box-like huts cluster by the ravine which the stream has cut. The sites have a double logic; their nearness to fresh water is an obvious convenience, and the rocky, irregular land near a creek's mouth is of no use for sugar.

The villages in many instances are on plantation property and the miserable shacks—picturesque to a traveller's eyes only because someone else lives in them—are rarely owned by their occupants. The peasants must pay rent for them. True, the rent is of an odd, old-fashioned kind called "peppercorn rent" and a favorite sum is a penny a month. . . . But a rent-payer may be evicted if he doesn't pay, or if he doesn't wish to work, or, best of all, if he clamors for high wages. It is a splendid scheme.

St. Kitts, despite centuries of cultivation, remains richly fertile. Yet the low country right round the island is almost devoid of trees. I once asked why. Trees would make the hot coast plains so much more habitable. Besides, if some of the common trees of the tropics—breadfruit, mango, coconut, avocado and the rest—were planted, the "Kittefonians" would have a cheap source of food. My friend, who knew his island well, was amused at my innocence. All this, I must remember, was company land. The companies had cut down all food trees. If a black man could feed himself too easily he might not wish to work.

My informant admitted that they did not like to. He was himself a colored man, and though he was cultivated, sensitive and travelled, he knew his darker brothers well. Admittedly they were shiftless, incorrigibly lazy. He granted they had no pure love of work. But for more generations than anyone re-

membered there had been no better reward for common labor on St. Kitts than a day-by-day and scanty living. Men who are paid in pennies are rarely either thrifty or ambitious. A St. Kitts Negro would have to save pinchingly for a century before he would have money enough to buy a farm—and when the century was up he would find there was no land for sale!

Their critic and champion added too, that they were stupidly destructive. Tools and machinery left to their care were soon broken. Perhaps, he suggested, that might be because they never had had any property themselves. It is hard to realize the value of another's wealth when one has had none of one's own.

The few more highly placed of their own race on St. Kitts are seeking by political pressure gradually to secure small holdings for a few peasant farmers, to win for the cane field workers some greater share of the sugar profits. In the last they have been partially successful. The tiny daily wage is now supplemented by an annual "bonus." This, I was told, in the case of certain prodigious and steady workers, has reached as much as twenty dollars a year! To everyone's satisfaction, it is paid out the week before Christmas and none of it is saved. The town of Basseterre is filled by a throng in carnival mood and the money is straightway and excitingly spent. But the most humble necessities on St. Kitts seem luxuries, and only the rich, in any case, object to poor men's extravagance. There are not enough of them on the island to be heard.

There is—my informed acquaintance said—an important additional factor in Kittefonian economics. The island has been amazingly sustained, "saved for the British Empire" he put it, by cash remittances from the United States. Many of the

islanders, during the period of easy emigration, moved to America and the majority of them each month send small sums home to their less happy relatives. Many who have not once revisited the island in ten or even twenty years, still remember. When one realizes the meager wages that must be the lot of the average black man of St. Kitts in the United States, those regular remittances take on a gleam and fineness all their own.

Yet though the shadow of Misery is deep, they are proud of their island. They know and remember its history.

St. Kitts was the first island in the West Indies to be colonized by Englishmen, the tip of the wedge that was to break the Spanish claim. It is the "Parent Colony."

The first settlement was founded by one Sir Thomas Warner in 1623. But it is recorded that there were three Frenchmen on the island and that they tried to set the Caribs against the new arrivals. St. Kitts therefore—there is other evidence—had probably had a century of curious history before Warner's formal flag-raising. It was one of the pirates' islands. St. Kitts was conveniently located, a kind of watchtower midway of the Caribbees from which sallies could be made upon galleons that passed either on the north of it to Española or south of it toward Panama.

There were Carib settlements on St. Kitts, but Caribs and pirates always seem to have understood each other. The Caribs, unlike the helpless Arawaks on the Greater Antilles, attacked all peaceful settlements at the drop of a hat, often with deadly success, but they were usually friendly to the buccaneers. It is not mysterious. The pirates did not wish their land nor desire to make them slaves upon it. Besides, first class fighting men respect each other.

The early pirate raiders followed a regular schedule. From June through September in the Caribbean is the season of hurricanes and dead calms. During those months the Spanish ships remained at their anchorages and the seas were empty, so then, trade slack, the pirates rested. If their ship's bottoms wanted attention, as in those fertile seas they invariably did, the late summer was the season when they beached them in shallows, careened and scraped them. Sails were patched and rigging fixed. And, because gold and pearls were sometimes commoner among them than meat and potatoes, they often farmed a little.

The fertile shore of St. Kitts would produce a crop of food before the summer ended. The Caribs could spare them so much space without grudging it. The buccaneers could wash and mend their stolen finery, sun themselves through the long days and sometimes breach a cask of rum at night. It was an idyllic, almost Gilbert and Sullivan pirate's life. In October they took up their trade and sailed and the island saw them no more until the summer calms came around again.

It was because of this intermittent occupancy that the first virtuous colonists were able to enjoy the sensation of being pioneer discoverers. They arrived in January when the pirates —except for the three stranded Frenchmen—were away on business. By the time they came back—not necessarily the same who had left nor, of course, on any schedule, they found their retreat occupied by earnest homesteaders. The idea of such incompatible neighbors was apparently too much for them, so they sailed on.

A French settlement was planted soon after the English one and for a time the two groups shared the island. Then for almost two hundred years St. Kitts was wearily shuttled back

and forth; taken by England, retaken by France, ceded by France, returned by treaty. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that was the fatiguing record of most of the lesser islands. There were so many of them it was as easy to take them as it was impossible to defend them. But though it was a wasteful method the shuttling served the cause of colonization, for at each change of rule a certain number of ousted colonists would gather their possessions and sail to another island. A great cargo of "Kittefonians" once went to Jamaica. Frenchmen, after an English defeat, went to Guadeloupe. Both, hoping for peace at last, formed small establishments on the "unknown" islands, hoping there to pass unnoticed. But those islands were poor and most Europeans soon left them.

St. Kitts was rich. At the beginning tobacco was the money crop, but sugar—then sold in Europe at the apothecaries at threepence an ounce—soon succeeded it. African slaves were fetched and when there were no wars to harry them, the planters enjoyed a life of expansive ease. They had fine houses on the mountain slopes above their fields, carriages, horses and innumerable servants. If their overseers were competent they had little work to do. It was possible to make long and frequent trips home to Europe. But sugar grew more and more common and when slavery was abolished in the British colonies in 1838, the great days ended.

The great-houses are gone, taken down brick by brick for the building of simpler dwellings. But the smooth, pale-green lower slopes of the island are everywhere marked by the solid structures of old grinding mills with beehive windmill towers. None is used now, for a single modern factory consumes all

St. Kitt's output of cane, but they still lend the landscape a note of picturesqueness and of peace.

One really extraordinary monument survives from the epoch of the great Anglo-French struggle—the great fort of Brimstone Hill.

It is ten miles north along the beach from Basseterre port and is clearly visible from the sea. The fort is cut from a solid natural limestone lump 779 feet high that piles up suddenly from the plain close to the beach. Brimstone Hill comes logically by its name, for the volcanic fires under it are still so warm that the neighborhood has a strong, almost choking, reek of sulphur.

Those people who must always dub everything with the name of something else, call Brimstone Hill the "Gibraltar of the West Indies"—for once with some justice.

It is one of the definitely interesting "side trips" of the Caribbean. Though Brimstone Hill has been abandoned as a military stronghold for a matter of only eighty years, it was so quickly overwhelmed by the swift growth of the tropics that soon whole buildings disappeared. But the St. Kitts government now takes some care of it and the lost barracks, storerooms and hospitals have been partially rediscovered. One may wander through its courts and gaunt chambers, sink deep into that mood that only monumental ruins bring. Nine hundred Englishmen once held it for a month against eight thousand French, but though Brimstone Hill was garrisoned for nearly two hundred years, few other tests were made of it. Most West Indian fighting was mobile and there were too many islands for an enemy to consent to bring himself conveniently beneath the guns of a stationary fort.

Basseterre, with a much-too-large population of nine thousand, was destroyed by fire in 1867, then rebuilt upon a larger plan. Its streets are wide and cleanly swept. Its houses, most of them square and built of wood, or half of wood and half of grey stone, are of a characteristic Caribbean type. The lower floor, unless it is devoted to a store or a warehouse, is often deserted. People prefer to live on the breezier, balconied second floor. But between the two-story boxes are many one-roomed cottages. All are occupied; many, indeed, are over-occupied, but few are squalid. The St. Kitts Negroes are firm and pious Protestants, law-abiding beyond all expectation. If there is no money on St. Kitts there is at least the sun and the rich warm kindliness of familiar friends. All—or so nearly all—are black that there is no one to despise them for it. Though they own none of it, still St. Kitts is theirs.

The huge volcano always broods above them. Strangely, there is another land beyond the cane fields, a high, dark land of forest, of wind and rain and silences. The heights, in reality so close yet so far away in mood are like some dwelling place of forbidden mysteries. To climb among them and look down is to achieve an immediate detachment. The dusty struggle of life below seems remote and unimportant.

. . . . . .

Nevis, only two miles across a strait from the end of the long "handle" of St. Kitts that extends southward, is a single volcanic cone that rises 3596 feet from the level of sea. Its shape is almost as perfect as that of Fujiyama, a perfection that unhappily is usually veiled by cloud. But at dawn and sun-

down Nevis is sometimes clear and from above in a plane the island is an incomparable sight.

Superficially Nevis is like its larger neighbor, St. Kitts, but the slopes around the base of the volcano, unlike the smooth and perfect fields of St. Kitts, are littered with coarse boulders, many of them as large as houses. So farming, over much of the area, presents a problem to baffle a Vermonter. Infinite labor through long generations has gone into clearing away the rocks, but much land remains useless for anything but coarse pasturage. But Nevis supports—though very meagerly—a population of thirteen thousand and there are numerous traces of a pretentious "plantocracy" past.

A twenty-mile drive around the island reveals Nevis with peculiar thoroughness—always excepting the secret heights of the volcano. There are ruins of a number of the eighteenth century great-houses, including the one where Alexander Hamilton was born, and the estate of Montpelier where Horatio Nelson was married to Mrs. Frances Nisbet—a lady who seems to have interested the Admiral but mildly and not at all after he met Emma Hamilton.

At Fig Tree Church, just outside of the little capital of Charlestown, the copy of the wedding certificates is solemnly preserved. Nelson was at the time a Captain in the West Indian Squadron and Nevis was a prosperous place where officers came to enjoy their leave. Though a decaying charm remains, it is no longer easy to recreate in fancy such a time.

Had the spacious days continued, Nevis might by this time have turned to a tropic Aix-les-Bain or Baden-Baden for Nevis has a mineral spring that ranks with the best of them anywhere. A somewhat forbidding structure—where one may

dwell, eat, bathe and swill the carbonates for $15. a week—marks the place, close to Charlestown anchorage. The spring water, warmed to a temperature of 108° F. by the volcano, rises perpetually in a pool, and there seems no question of its efficacy. Captain John Smith—the one of that name who made so strong an impression on Pocahontas—visited it many times during one phase of his career, and during the years when Nevis was the fashion, the wealthy of all the English Caribbees came there further to sweat themselves and be cured of their various ailments. One of the most chronic was rum. . . . Sodas, carbonates and steaming could hardly have failed to have helped. . . .

. . . . . .

Antigua lies east of Nevis, some forty miles away. It is the capital of the Leeward Islands.

That name Leeward Islands calls for an explanation. Unfortunately, none is forthcoming. The term has become so scrambled down the years that it is now meaningless. During the Spanish time the description Leeward, or "other-side-of-the-wind" was applied to the large northern islands, the greater Antilles, as being less exposed to the force of the trade winds than those from the Virgin Islands south, which the Spaniards called the Windward Islands. The early division was logical, for the trade winds blow hard on the less easterly islands that string down to Trinidad and diminish as they blow from Puerto Rico west. Now, however, "Leeward" and "Windward" are simply names applied to two groups of British-owned islands, each group forming a separate colonial division.

The role of "capital" of the Leeward group means simply

that Antigua (it is pronounced Anteega) is where the Governor-General has his residence. Antigua is densely populated —though thirty-four thousand people on an agricultural island of 108 square miles by no means approaches the West Indian saturation point—and though its economy is dependent wholly on the state of the sugar market, with luck and good management Antigua sustains itself at a slightly higher level of existence than do its neighbors.

Though the harbor of St. John's is landlocked and charming it is too shallow for deep-draught vessels so steamers anchor some two miles outside the landing place. Cargo is handled in lighters and passengers are carried in by launches. The trip in is over sheltered, rippling water. The white town is at the end of the bay and the sugar fields roll away beyond it. The relics of Fort James, built at the beginning of the eighteenth century, are on a point at the left of a harbor entrance and the launches that meet the steamers usually stop at a pier there before going on to the town. The incurious—and those who have reached the not unjustifiable conclusion that the "sugar islands" are much alike—can disembark there and spend their whole time ashore in Antigua in swimming. Below the Fort, and across the narrow point, is an excellent beach, equipped with a diving board, raft, bath houses and a nearby restaurant where one may eat and drink. If time is short, and the passion for seawater is strong upon one, it is an excellent idea. The Fort James beach, however, is only a very small section of Antigue's miles of sandy shore. The few winter visitors who have formed the Antigua habit have at their disposal, so long as their enterprise holds, remarkable distances of faultless, unused swimming places. The water everywhere is clean and

blue and the surf gentle. At many places low bluffs behind the white beaches wall them privately, in others groves of coconut palms edge close down to the sea.

The island itself is pastoral. The southwestern quarter is mountainous and of characteristic volcanic formation, but the rest is a rolling field and pasture country. In the late afternoon —middays wipe most expression from the island's face—Antigua is lovely. Sunset colors tint the cane, the empty roads fill with the colorful procession of laborers returning home. Curiously beautiful humped oxen, the honey-color of a tanned blond body, stand beneath great twisted trees by the road's edge. Peace transpires like a perfumed breath from the cooling fields.

Across the island, for those with a taste for naval history, is English Harbour. The drive to it and back takes about three hours.

The Harbour, planned as an important naval base, was begun in 1726 and was used until the growing size of warships outmoded it. Nelson once "fitted" there. Though English Harbour has now long been unused it is kept in order and the sail lofts, barracks, coal stores, officers' and seamen's quarters form an interesting record.

. . . . . .

Montserrat, only twenty-five miles southwest of Antigua, is of a totally different character. It has only thirty-two square miles of area—most of them nearly vertical. Three groups of mountains rise steeply up, jostling one another with theatrical effect. The tallest peak, the still volcanically active Soufrière, reaches three thousand feet, and though there are cultivatable

slopes and valleys on Montserrat, flat fields are rare. Sugar—one has had enough sugar!—is therefore a crop of minor importance.

Little on Montserrat resembles its neighbors. Its greater elevation halts more passing clouds, so its rainfall is greater, its forests greener. Much of the scenery of Montserrat, an extraordinary lot of which is compacted in a little space, is spectacular in the extreme. Here, if one has come south with mechanical regularity, is the first sight of the exuberant intricacy of tropical jungle, that world-in-itself that is like no other. "Woods"—"forest"—no common words will do for it. Every plant is unfamiliar, each leaf and tendril has a shape unlike the leaf-shapes of the north. Where the ground is moist and rich there is no inch that has not produced some growth peculiar to itself.

Montserrat, being unsuitable for cane, engages in the growing of Sea Island cotton and great quantities of limes. Both are more attractive crops to look at. Montserrat is a fruit island, so a green one.

The theme of greenness is somewhat startlingly carried out. An Erin harp appears upon the Coat of Arms of Montserrat. Its population of thirteen thousand Negroes speaks with a marked Irish brogue.

West Indian accents, ranging from the queerness of Haitian French, through variations of Spanish, and concluding with the many different dialects of each of the English-speaking islands, would provide a lifetime study in themselves. People of good ear and long West Indian experience can guess the place of origin of any "monkey-chaser" (as West Indian Negroes are rudely called by their Harlem cousins) before he has

spoken three sentences. Natives of Montserrat are the easiest of all to place. . . . Absurdly, they seem to combine with their intonation some of the character of Ireland, a quality of humor, of "blarney," a hospitality and cheerful irresponsibility peculiarly their own.

There is a simple explanation. Among the early settlers on St. Kitts there were a small number of Roman Catholics, most of them Irish. They were in a minority and the strong Protestantism of the remainder oppressed their spirits, if no more. So, since the steep hills of Montserrat * were empty and in clear sight not far away, they moved. The existence of a Catholic settlement becoming known, others of the persuasion who came to the West Indies to colonize made Montserrat their choice, with the result that after only sixteen years of occupancy, the white population of the island had increased to a thousand families—a number that would be inconceivable today. Hardly a trace of the original pure stock is left. In Montserrat all skins seem black, singularly black. Natural selection has been at work. The most fit have survived.

The town is called Plymouth. Ships anchor offshore and the run in is made in rowboats. . . . As an objective for the curious there is a drive and a stiff walk after it to the crater of the Soufrière. One may go without danger to the very brink of a continuous hell, look into a huge vat of boiling, bubbling stone.

Volcanoes are regarded as the safety valves of earth. Geologists say that a time to dread would be the day when they all grew still. For the gigantic heat of the *magma* beneath the thin

* Named by Columbus after a mountain of pious pilgrimage near Barcelona.

crust of the earth is everlasting, and the magma is constantly being disturbed by the leakage of surface water down to it. Water upon molten lava produces steam pressures almost beyond human imagining. Something, somewhere, must obviously give; craters are earth's natural safety valves.

Unfortunately, the Soufrière of Montserrat has not done its work with entire efficiency. For the past several years—they have seemed long to its inhabitants—Montserrat has been shaken by a series of earthquakes. Some have been violent enough to throw down buildings, a number have been slight and most have been undetectable except by the finely-poised stylus of a seismograph. But just when the Montserratians have concluded all was calm again and have cleared the litter and mended the cracked walls, another severe quake has struck and it has all had to be done over again.

It has been, to say the least, discouraging. But men grow used even to earthquakes. As for travellers, they need have no fear of them. On the contrary, mild earthquakes, like mild rum, are an agreeable stimulant.

XI — *THE FRENCH ISLANDS*

DURING the four centuries of their known history the volcanoes of the southern West Indies have been generally tolerant of human life. There has been much smoke from them but little fire.

Morne * Pelée, whose great pile fills the northern end of the island of Martinique, however, is a dog of another breed. One needs but to see its looming, barren mass, incongruous against the blue innocence of sky, to know that. Like an old fighter, Pelée's flanks are scarred and scabbed. Dark smears of

* "Morne" is a French Crèole word. It means simply mountain.

ash and lava cover its slopes. The intrusive green of the tropics has crept up them but a little way. The crater, 4900 feet above sea level, has a black and vicious edge. The plume of smoke that sometimes swings from it is heavy, warning.

Watch is kept on Pelée now. An expert volcanologist presides over a white, round-topped little observatory on a high shoulder that commands a view of the volcano's crater. Daily he surveys it through glasses, measures its rumblings and changings with a battery of instruments. He has concluded that Pelée's growls are harmless, that the giant will sleep for centuries. So in the grey town of St. Pierre down by the sea's edge they are building more new houses every year. The vines are being torn from broken walls and fields of rubble have been cleared and planted with yams and taro and cassava. A pawpaw tree grows by the ruins of the jail. . . .

St. Pierre was once the chief city of the island. Martinique had long been French and a special mold of life had set. French grace, French manners, French fashions had been adapted to the brilliant, different world of a tropical island, lost none of their essence, yet had evolved as something new. The plaid turbans of the Martinique Crèole * women were a unique style. The cut of dresses that were the mode of Paris during the First Empire were still current in Martinique almost a century later.

St. Pierre had a population of forty-thousand. Red-roofed, well-built houses lined its long waterfront street and climbed the slopes above it. There was a ponderous Cathedral, a thea-

* Crèole means merely "native to the West Indies"—and may be applied to anything—horses, fashions, or citizens. It carries no suggestion of Negro blood.

ter, cafés where the prosperous Martiniquais planters sat under striped awnings. Unlike many of their British neighbors, the French have come to their islands to make their homes on them, to live on them, to establish a way of life that their children and grandchildren will continue after them, without too many backward looks toward France. The city of St. Pierre expressed that sense of permanence.

In the early spring of 1902 Morne Pelée had begun to spurt and rumble. A burst of fire down a far side of the mountain had destroyed several sugar estates and taken one hundred and fifty lives. There had been days of terrifying darkness, and fine ash, thrown up by the crater, had sifted down over the whole northern coast of the island. Several thousand laborers, driven by fear from the plantations nearer the mountain, had come down into the town, uncomfortably swelling its population. But soon the manifestations of violence in the volcano lessened . . . after all, it had been harmless for centuries.

A man of science after a cursory examination of the mountain gave an interview in the St. Pierre newspaper in which he expressed the opinion that Pelée by the recent explosion had released its ardors and that henceforth it would remain indefinitely at peace. "Pelée," said the *savant,* "does not offer more danger to the inhabitants of St. Pierre than Vesuvius does to Naples."

The interview appeared on May 7, 1902. The town took heart.

The next morning dawned more clearly. St. Pierre was quiet, for it was a day of religious holiday. There were seventeen ships in the harbor roads, one of them a large passenger

steamer of a Canadian company. The hands of a clock in the Cathedral tower moved to 7:30 . . . 7:40. . . . The relative of a gentleman of St. Pierre, in the town of Fort de France at the other side of the island, had telephoned to ask if all was well. His cousin was assuring him that Morne Pelée was quiet, that there was nothing to be feared. The connection was abruptly broken.

The minute hand in the cathedral clock had reached 7:45. An instant later there was no clock, no tower, no church, no town. Forty thousand people had been instantly killed.

Of the seventeen ships in the bay one—the *Roddam*—survived. It had arrived earlier that morning and had been ordered to anchor apart from the others to wait for *pratique*. Most of those who were aboard her were killed but an officer lived to report what he had seen. Without warning the whole side of the volcano, four and a half miles beyond the town, had opened and from it had burst a storm of living flame. Within a few seconds the cloud of fire reached the coast city, striking down upon it with cyclonic violence. Some of the ships offshore were promptly overturned, all were burned. Aboard the *Roddam* three officers were killed and seven men were roasted alive upon the deck.

Morne Pelée's crater had been stoppered with a hard cap of long-cold lava. That morning a sudden upsurging of force from the earth's depths had thrust up so quickly that the floor of the crater had had no time to melt. The hard lava had been lifted up, part of it above the crater's edge on the side just above St. Pierre. A colossal "nozzle" had been formed. An observer on the *Roddam* used the expression "a dragon's mouth of flame." The nozzle had directed the fire straight down upon

the city. The heat was so terrific that limestone walls were crumbled, iron was melted, glass bottles turned to puddles of liquid. The death of the forty thousand was instantaneous.

There was one survivor ashore, a Negro criminal in a dungeon in the St. Pierre jail. One may see his cell today and understand why. It is cut partly out of the hill and its back is toward the mountain. For days, until rescue reached him, he was locked alone in that seared and stricken town.

For years St. Pierre was left empty. But life is stronger than death in the countries of the sun. Soon the grey piles of the wrecked and powdered houses were green again. And the poor of the islands have no such wide choice that they can afford to neglect even what seems doomed land. Slowly they began to filter back. There were loose stones a-plenty. Huts were built, then houses. Morne Pelée, its spasm past, was quiet again.

Traces of the holocaust were still evident. But St. Pierre has again become a considerable and cheerful town. On a terrace above the bay is a museum of the disaster that contains a fascinating medley of melted bottles, of all manner of strange fragments that were found among the ruins.

Many steamers make St. Pierre their first stop at Martinique, then go on to Fort de France, the capital. Those who disembark at St. Pierre can drive overland and rejoin the ship.

Martinique is steeply mountainous. Since its rainfall is nearly double that of the Leeward Islands, it is richly fertile. Fields that are level enough for the purpose are planted with bananas, coconuts, and cocoa, all of which add picturesqueness to the landscape. The many ravines and peaks that are too sheer for cultivation are covered with dense forest. In the in-

terior of Martinique, one loses all sense of proportion. There are no great distances, no great altitudes, but the effect, somehow, is one of immensity—of immensity reduced to accessible proportions; controlled, as it were, by admirable French taste.

The road winds round the flanks of cloud-hung hills, dark pinnacles rise dramatically above valleys through which run clear mountain streams all but lost in exotic vegetation. For long distances the forest arches completely above the way. Tall fronds of bamboo swish and rustle in the mountain wind.

Martinique is nearly fifty miles long and thirteen miles wide and it has a population of nearly 250,000, so it is obviously thickly settled. But because its up and down distances seem greater than its horizontal ones and because much virgin forest is still left, there is little of the oppressive sense of crowds, of striving, desperate life, that one feels on many of the other islands. Martinique, in terms of imports and exports, has not been so prosperous as some of its British neighbors. But for that very reason life on it has been happier. There is no confinement of great parts of the population to narrow strips near the sugar fields. Everyone does not depend for a daily living on the uncertainties of estate employment. In Martinique there are peasants' huts through all the hills.

They are not fine huts. Many are made from the materials that the forest itself provides and are nearly as primitive as those of Africa. They cling sometimes to hillsides so precipitous that one wonders why their inhabitants haven't legs of unmatching lengths. But the people who live in them own them and the land around them. The Martinique peasants do not "lie in the sun and wait for food to drop into their mouths." A small farmer in the tropics must work steadily and

hard for his living. Existence is difficult. But it is free. It is possible.

The Negro hill folk of Martinique take the produce of their gardens into the towns for sale. They carry the heavy loads on

their heads—fine-featured heads very often, wrapped in the bright cotton turbans that are the Martiniquais fashion. They go barefoot and the roads are long and steep. The habit has

given them an erect and beautiful carriage, a long and swinging stride. But the posture is not merely the result of a kind of physical exercise. It is born, too, of pride.

If one knows no French the casual contacts between a tourist and a Negro of Martinique are usually amiable but confusing. In such matters as bargaining, each is convinced that the other is crazy and both try to cheat as much as possible. But a traveller who does chance to speak French finds himself at once in a different category. He is regarded as a human being —it is expected that he will behave like one.

Once, in the mountains, a seamed and lean old woman, barefoot and in a black dress of rags, approached me, bowed, and asked if I would give her a bill for some change she had. She had been selling fruit to American tourists in a string of cars that were crossing the island and they had paid her in American small currency, which she could not exchange at the bank. The change was wrapped in a wet green leaf and when I had given her the bill I opened it and began to count up. Without a word the old Negress put my bill back in my hand, took her money and turned her back on me. Unthinkingly, I had shown I doubted her honesty. She was black, barefoot and a pauper. But her breeding at that moment, she made me feel very clearly, exceeded mine. She was gracious enough, when I stood hat in hand and made my apologies, to accept them with a courtly inclination of her head.

Met on their own high level, talked to simply and directly in their own tongue, the people of Martinique with remarkable consistency prove gracious, generous and charming. . . . An old man who was a leper talked with me one day in a park. We spoke of life, of the weather, and of poverty. He

did not beg but when he bowed and said goodbye I asked if he would accept some money and held out a few small coins. He stepped back hurriedly, then took from his pocket a clean handkerchief which he folded and held out to me. I was to put the money on that. He was a leper. I must not touch him. . . . Once I was momentarily lost in the hot hillside slum above the town of Fort de France. I asked a Negro woman in the door of a dirty kennel of a hut the way to a certain market down in the city. She called her daughter, a lusty girl of fifteen or sixteen, and said that she would accompany me. The child walked shyly ahead of me. The distance to the market was over a mile and it was hot high noon. She went with me all the way and when I tried to tip her she gigglingly refused and ran away. . . . And, again, I sat for most of a long, still afternoon in a cheap side-street café in Fort de France. I was alone and my mien must have been melancholy. The café waitresses were three young black girls in colored gingham dresses. They were young and rather pretty and as simple and direct as kittens. They were touched by my solitude—so all, before the afternoon was done, asked if I would care to sleep with them? It was an offer of pure friendliness, untouched by guile, or viciousness, or thought of profit. They accepted my refusal as sweetly as if they had offered me a cigarette.

The road across the island descends at last from the hills just above the capital. Blessedly, it has missed the sugar country all the way. The sugar estates of the wealthy whites of Martinique, from which comes most of the island's income, are mostly to the east and south.

Fort de France from above is wide, cluttered, brightly colored. The deep-indented bay beyond it is grey-blue in the

daytime haze, studded with islands, and backed by the farther island ranges to the south. Fort de France has a population of more than forty thousand and is the most considerable town in the French West Indies. Casual visitors are always violently divided about Fort de France, about Martinique in general. Many regard the island as the most winning, most memorable of all. Others loathe it at once and permanently.

There is little comparison between the French West Indian towns and those in the British islands. The British-ruled streets are neat and wide, the French narrow and dirty; the houses of Fort de France are variously colored, differently designed; in the comparable English islands they are usually white and uniformly square. . . . There is no denying French West Indian garbage or a conspicuous contentment with open sewers. Glassware in Fort de France cafés is certainly less gleaming than it might be and germs very probably abound.

But I would trust even germs in Martinique. I should expect them to have temperament and taste and to do nothing so unpleasant to a stranger as to abide with him. I am aware that the public market of Fort de France is littered, dark, smelly, dirty; yet I believe it is worth hours of scrutiny. The very smells form part of a pattern that is vigorous, brilliant, and completely fascinating.

The Savane is the main grass park in the center of the town. At one side of it are the cafés, the beginnings of the streets of shops, and a few official buildings. At the other side, behind the deep shadows of old trees, is the grey mass of Fort Louis, long guardian of the oldest and most important possession of France in the New World. In the midst of the Savane, with

tall Royal Palms around it, is a marble statue of Josephine de la Pagerie, Empress of France.

It is by the sculptor Vital Debray and it is by all odds the most beautiful work of art in the Caribbean. It is tall, lonely, elegant, deeply moving. Josephine stands facing the place where she was born.

Her father was overseer of a sugar estate at Trois Islets, across the bay. Soon after Josephine's birth a hurricane destroyed the fields and the plantation house and brought the family to the verge of ruin. She spent her childhood in quarters they had fashioned in the ruined mill on the estate. Then a rich aunt took her to Paris. Josephine was young, lovely. At sixteen she married the Vicomte de Beauharnais. Of the unhappy match were born two children, both of whom played their rôles in the later Napoleonic dynasty. Beauharnais was killed during the Terror. Josephine then married the young commander Bonaparte . . . and so came to fame, to loneliness and tragedy and death at last. Now in marble that outlasts youth and age and kingdoms she stands in the sun and the wind and the south again.

. . . . . .

Both Martinique and Guadeloupe owe their fixedly French character to long possession. Both islands were settled by parties of French colonists in the same year, 1635, and though both were repeatedly attacked and taken by British naval expeditions during the second half of the eighteenth century—and as often retaken by France—both were returned to permanent French possession in 1815.

Guadeloupe is for some reason less talked-of that almost any

other of the important Caribbee islands. Except that it is a French colony and that as one passes by at sea it seems hugely mountainous, little is commonly known of it.

In reality, Guadeloupe consists of two islands, separated by a shallow strait of the sea only a few hundred feet wide. The more westerly and conspicuous of the two is called Basse Terre—or "Low Land." Who thought that one up it would be interesting to know. For nearly all of Basse Terre is volcanic, rugged and mountainous, culminating in the smoking crater of Soufrière * at 4900 feet above sea level. Grande Terre, by the same simple rule of opposites, is smaller and flat. Between them they divide a population of quarter of a million, rather more, in recent years, than Martinique.

Even fairly experienced West Indian travellers greet Guadeloupe with exclamations of surprise. They did not know what it was that they expected, they assure each other, but it was nothing so definite. Guadeloupe is vast—the mere statistic "619 square miles" gives no adequate impression of it. It gives every appearance of energy, prosperity and self-reliance. Guadeloupe may seem remote to strangers from America or England, but its inhabitants would be amazed that anyone thought so. The chief harbor of Pointe-à-Pitre at the edge of Grande Terre island, has a long concrete wharf by which often half-a-dozen steamers at a time are moored, while still others lie at anchor in the bay. Guadeloupe exports huge quantities of sugar and rum to France and in exchange buys everything from modern movies to canned snails. It is very busy, very

* There are Soufrières on many of the islands. Literally translated soufrière means "sulphur mine." The word is applied to sulphurous volcanic craters.

preoccupied—unaware that the genus tourist exists upon this earth.

The port of Basseterre (at least consistently, on Basse Terre island) backs so close against the mountains that most of its streets climb up them. It is grey, green, either furiously busy or fast asleep. Being unaffected by the strange Nordic distaste for trees, Basseterre's main boulevard along the waterfront is edged with shaded parks where one may sit and watch the black and energetic world go past. The Negroes of Guadeloupe are as vocal and gesticulatory as so many Marseillaises. A debate over a cabfare rises to the pitch and passion of a Chambre des Deputés debate over a new tax. Tears and knives seem imminent. Cheerful peace succeeds as suddenly. On days when a tour ship is in, Basseterre is bedlam. But it is a bedlam to be enjoyed. One must meet it head on, with equal emotion and equal good temper.

The drive overland to Pointe-à-Pitre (due to the position of the two cities, Pointe-à-Pitre, rather puzzlingly, lies north) takes the better part of a morning and should, if one is to look about appreciatively, take longer. Much of the way is strikingly lovely.

A spur of the road climbs close to the dark jungle that grows round the sulphurous crater of the Soufrière. Wisps of cloud, even on bright windy days, hang in the valleys, lie in the tree-tops like blown and tangled webs. "Villas," their somewhat sparse and gingerbready architecture redeemed by the profusion of bright flowers that all but conceals them, stand on shoulders of the hills where they may look down over the city and the harbor.

The main route to Pointe-à-Pitre traverses broken, moun-

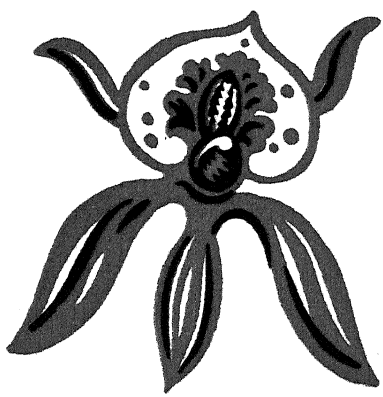
tainous country and passes through numberless small towns. Basse Terre island is well watered and at several places old stone bridges cross cascading streams. The blue, surf-edged sea comes into sight again and again and repeatedly the road dips down and parallels it. Farther on, more monotonously, are long miles through fertile, rolling sugar country.

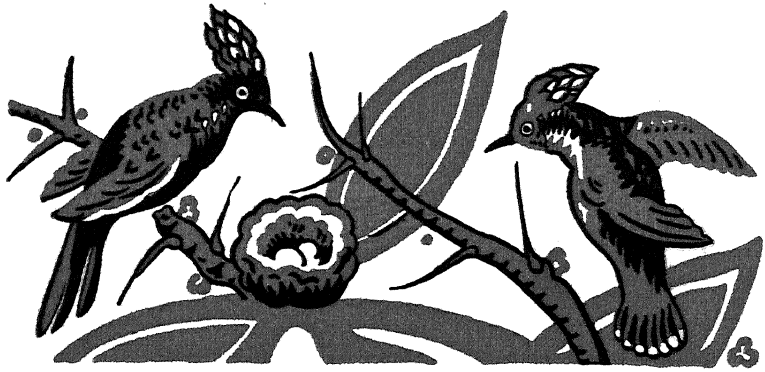
Pointe-à-Pitre is on level land. At midday it is glaring, bright, and colorfully crowded. A surprising number of buildings are new and in the French modern manner, a style that has an appropriateness in the tropics that it most dismally lacks in a bleak November rain in France.

A native market in the center of the city is one of the "sights" of the West Indies. Pointe-à-Pitre market is not for those who judge far places by the standards of Peoria, nor from the point of view of hygiene. The French in hot countries have never taken the teachings of Pasteur seriously, nor do town-dwelling Negroes of the poorer class have the habits of Rotterdam housewives. Between them, on a busy market day, the two races toss garbage about with all the abandon of rose-leaves at a Bacchanal. But it is unusual garbage, for the produce of the Pointe-à-Pitre market is exotic almost beyond recognition. . . . The *Guadeloupiennes* wear flowing cotton print costumes of all shades, with a leaning toward blues, lavenders and pinks. Their heads are surmounted by oddly tied turbans, their black faces are typically lean and mobile, their talk is rapid, their gestures dramatically descriptive. The tables under the sun by the old bronze fountain are *natures mortes* of extraordinary effectiveness.

A fairly large coral island named Marie Galante lies sixteen miles south of Guadeloupe and is its political dependency.

Marie Galante is a sugar island with a population of over fifteen thousand, accessible only by intermediate steamers from Pointe-à-Pitre. If anyone has ever visited it, I have never heard of him. For all I know Marie Galante is the jewel of the Caribbean.





XII—*THE WINDWARD ISLANDS*

LONG before the coming of the first Europeans the Carib Indians from the South American mainland had conquered and settled all of the southern islands. The aboriginal Arawak men had been killed and many, without doubt, had been eaten. The Arawak women who survived had been enslaved, so at least in theory the Carib * race was changing. But men ruled custom and there was no apparent tampering of the breed through soft admixture. The habit of fierce self-reliance and of war remained with the Caribs to the end. When the waves of settlement began to beat upon the islands the Caribs manfully resisted. On St. Kitts and Antigua, where their villages were small, they were defeated and driven off, the survivors retiring in their long war canoes to less vulnerable islands.

* The word "cannibal" is supposed to derive from Carib—by an early misprinting and ensuing mispronunciation of the rendering "*Caribales.*" The r was written as an n.

Dominica, (accent on the next to the last syllable) most ruggedly mountainous of the Lesser Antilles, covered with jungle from shore to summits, became their stronghold. From Dominica they made their repeated raids upon the settlers who had bloodily displaced them.

Antigua, for some reason, was the Caribs' most frequent victim. Though Antigua is one hundred and fifty sea miles from Dominica, Guadeloupe lies on the way and was used as an intermediate base. In 1640 the long canoes, some of them holding as many as a hundred naked, painted fighting men, raided Antigua with such effect that every plantation then on the island was pillaged and burned, and the Governor's wife and two children were carried off. For the next quarter-century hardly a year passed without some sudden foray. These white men had guns and ships and the Caribs fought with no better weapons than bows and clubs. But they were unaffected by the foolish piety of the northern Indians who had thought the discoverers immortal. They saw them as men and enemies and they had tasted of all of them—though with little liking. They found whites in general indigestible and far too salty. But if one had to choose, French flesh, they said, was the most delicate and Spanish the toughest.

No Europeans contemplated any settlements on Dominica. It was long left to its possessors without challenge. A punitive expedition under the command of the governor of the English Leeward colony in 1675 at last braved a landing on Dominica and burned a few Carib villages. But the menace of the raids was only temporarily halted. In the ensuing years Barbuda, Nevis and Montserrat all suffered. But as the defenses of the settled islands improved, the attacks eventually ceased. Inex-

orable law was at work. The numbers of the primitive Caribs were diminishing. Their hour had passed.

Yet with extraordinary tenacity they still held to certain of the islands, those most favored by their mountains for defense. In 1748 by treaty agreement between the European states with interests in the Caribbean, Dominica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Tobago (north of Trinidad) were declared Carib territory. Officially, the powers admitted their defeat.

Common pioneer settlers, however, were more tenacious. Despite the "no trespass" sign that had been set on it, a group of Frenchmen somehow won a foothold on Dominica and established a few plantations. The Caribs withdrew farther into the hills. By this gradual process the island was at last taken.

However, the French were to hold it only sporadically. The island during the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Caribbean was the theater of almost perpetual war between the two powers, was repeatedly taken by England and just as often dramatically won again by France. But the British claim was finally established during the French revolution. All trace that now remains of the original owners is in the common speech of Dominica, a local French patois as curious as that spoken on the neighboring island of St. Lucia.

The effects of a late start are still evident. Dominica is less developed, more thinly populated than any of the West Indies. Most of the island is covered by primeval forest, some of it—an inaccessible summit here and there—is actually unexplored.

There is no coastal plain, therefore little sugar land. Uniquely, the forty-eight thousand Dominicans *import* sugar. Its crops are "forest" crops such as limes, oranges, bananas,

coconuts and cocoa and the production of them is steadily increasing. But Dominica has been dogged by difficulties. The hazard of the Caribs has been succeeded by the more enduring one of floods and high winds. The mountains arrest rain-clouds that pass by flatter islands. In certain high valleys as much as three hundred inches of rain have been recorded in a year and the several hundred streams of the island sometimes come cascading down with destructive energy. Bridges and sections of Dominica's seventy-eight miles of road are continually being washed away. England has had patiently to foot an insular deficit time and again. Imports exceed exports, expenditure is persistently larger than revenue.

But all that makes Dominica troublesome to England and difficult for its inhabitants makes it charming to the visitors. Not much of it however, is easily accessible. Seventy-eight miles of highway on an island twenty-nine miles long and sixteen wide are very little. Many settlements along the coast can be reached only by sea or by steep overland foottrails. So one who would know Dominica with any thoroughness must be prepared for some exertion.

The town and port is Roseau. There are no wharfs and passengers must be ferried in by rowboats—there is clamorous competition for the trade—over nearly a mile of choppy water. Roseau itself is not representative of the island. Though it has some of the picturesqueness inseparable from any Negro, tropical town, it is shabby, in few ways worthy of its background. Near it, however, there is a Botanic Garden of exceptional beauty. The fertility and climate of Dominica permit of the growth of a great range of tropical plants. They provide an invariably satisfactory show.

In the tropics one should not be too sophisticated to "go in for" Botanic Gardens. It is true, they do sound oppressive. One thinks of those doleful greenhouses in northern parks where one trudges over wet concrete floors, falls over hoses, breathes thick and weedy air and contemplates, with an absolute minimum of emotion, rows of nameless greenery in pots. The reality, in Roseau, is very different. Nature in the warm latitudes has been amazingly inventive. There are trees that have their own powerful, supporting buttresses to support them against hurricane winds; a tree, that wearying of having uninvited vines growing on it, has produced its own vine, seemingly apart from the rest of the trunk or upper branches; trees that grow in a continuous spiral; trees that produce no leaves but only flowers; palms in numberless varieties. Many of the freak varieties are common in the forest, but jungle is too intricately tangled for clear understanding. It is pleasant to come upon them one by one, all neatly labelled.

No automobile drive in Dominica is disappointing. The majestic shape of the island makes that impossible. Waterfalls, jungle and precipitous mountains are the stuff of dramatic landscapes, and Dominica has them all in plenty. The trip to Sylvania citrus estate in a valley among the mountains is probably as fine as any. Sulphur Spring, the Waterfalls, and Freshwater Lake are all excellent objectives. . . . To see the Lake, which is at a three thousand feet elevation, sightseers must go on horseback for an hour or two by forest paths.

Boiling Lake, the chief natural wonder of Dominica, is the caldera of an active volcano. It is at the bottom of sheer-sided slopes and the sulphur in it is in constant bursting, bubbling activity. The visit to it is in the nature of an expedition, for

travellers must stop overnight on the way and much of the subsequent clambering is difficult, but the melancholy and fury of the crater, the splendid, harried gloom of the mountains near it, provide a memorable experience, one unique among the islands.

On a distant end of Dominica is the village of the last Caribs surviving in the lands they so long held. They are governed by their own King and they live apart from the common life of the island. But the breed has altered, the fashions of the past have gone.

. . . . . .

Dominica has only recently been detached, for administrative purposes, from the Leeward Islands Colony and added to the British Windward group. The move was logical. The Leeward Islands, with Dominica detached from them, now have a consistency of character and economic interest.

The other "Windwards" are St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Grenada. . . .

. . . . . .

There are lands that are said to be happy in having no history. St. Lucia should be happy having such an overwhelming lot of history that no one can possibly remember it. From the first permanent settlement in 1650 to the final cession of the island to England in 1814, St. Lucia's allegiance was forcibly transferred between France and England fifteen times. One hopes, in simple charity, that the pig-tailed, round-eyed school children of St. Lucia are not required to remember either the dates or reasons. . . .

The century and three-quarters of shuttlecocking has left its mark on local speech, for St. Lucians speak no known or written tongue. For the benefit of strangers most of the island Negroes can produce a pleasant and comprehensible English, better in some respects, since it was learned at school, than the some of the oddly-accented dialects of other islands. But among themselves they revert to a tongue that is their own. One afternoon at twilight, after a shower had cooled St. Lucia and the dying sun was red, I sat entranced for an hour on a broken piling at the head of Castries bay and simply listened. A ship was in and a crowd of boys and young men had gathered in the hope that I was a tourist of liberal habits; disappointed, they had stayed to chat, soon become more interested in their own conversation than in mine.

It sounded like French. A boy halted the flow long enough to inform me: "We speak on St. Lucia, marster, a very bad patois French." Having delivered himself of this faultless utterance, he then lapsed into it. The St. Lucian dialect is a French of incredible badness and it is constantly punctuated by phrases, sometimes whole sentences of equally queer English. A specialist who would make a study of it would derive possible profit, certainly a headache. . . . But it adds a flavor to the island, contributes to that quality the West Indies have so abundantly, of strangeness, and of faraway-ness.

St. Lucia is mountainous, green, volcanic. The tumbling down of part of the island and the rising of the seas in ages past provided it with an excellent crater harbor, a nearby enclosed bay surrounded by hills. Passengers who have grown weary of endangering their ankles by hopping in and out of rowboats and sacrificing shilling after shilling to reach shore,

discover with relief that at St. Lucia there is a place for steamers to go alongside. The ship's companionway is lowered directly to a concrete wharf. The town of Castries begins thirty feet away. The first of the wooded mountains is only a few hundred yards beyond.

Castries itself is as correct and clean as a Methodist mission. The sixty-five thousand people of St. Lucia, report the custom's authorities, buy and use four pounds of soap each one of them per year!

The interior of the island may be reached with some thoroughness over a hundred and fifty miles of good roads. One of the best drives, as a matter of fact is a matter of a mere ten minutes from the port.

To the right of the bay, as one comes in, rises the steep pile of Morne Fortune. The Governor's residence is on a spur of it and halfway up, nestled pleasantly against the hillside, is one of the most presentable hotels among the smaller islands. Near the top of the Morne are the now deserted barracks of the British army regiments that once were stationed there and from the summit one commands a view of remarkable extent. If the hour is clear one can look across the island to the two remarkable isolated peaks, the Gros Piton and the Petit Piton, that are St. Lucia's most famous spectacles. Between, are the ranges of the middle island, a long sweep of surf-edged coast, and the gleam of the wide sea.

The two Pitons are at the southwestern corner of St. Lucia. Both peaks are steeply conical in shape, jungle-covered and sheer enough to offer an enthusiast a real problem in mountain climbing. The ascent of the Petit Piton is so difficult that the summit was not "won" until late in the last century, and the

name of the explorer is recorded in the annals of mountaineering. The round trip to the pinnacle and back takes from dawn until after dusk and assaults made on it are rare.

A hazard of days past has greatly lessened, but only a persistent blunderer through the St. Lucia bush could say whether it has wholly disappeared. St. Lucia long had an evil fame as the favorite home of one of the deadliest of serpents, the rat-tailed viper, or *fer-de-lance*. The *fer-de-lance* is terrestrial and nocturnal. The largest specimens reach a length of seven feet and the thickness of a man's arm, and though their coloring varies, it is usually a reddish-yellow-brown, with two rows of irregular dark cross-bands on the body. During the warm daytime the *fer-de-lance* lies curled up with its head buried in its folds, ready to strike with terrible rapidity at the approach of an enemy. Its bite is deadly. There is an island legend of a party of British sailors who once undertook the ascent of the Gros Piton. They were watched from below and as they climbed higher and higher, one by one they disappeared—struck down by *fer-de-lances*.

Since snakes on inhabited islands always tend to disappear the *fer-de-lances* on St. Lucia are now tremendously reduced, but a few may be left, so walkers in the deeper parts of the forest, far from settlements, had best be wary. In the past the *fer-de-lances* were a terror of many of the islands and there is the extraordinary story that planters on certain islands where they did not naturally exist imported them! Their purpose was to furnish a terror even worse than themselves in the forests beyond the cane fields so runaway slaves would not seek haven there.

St. Vincent, the next of the Windward Islands, lies thirty miles southwest of St. Lucia. Along with its fellow "Windwards," it ranks in interest and beauty far higher than the sugar islands. With them, while tens of thousands enthuse over Barbadoes and Jamaica, neither of which compares with St. Vincent save in physical comforts, it is almost wholly neglected. A few way-steamers stop at St. Vincent's port of Kingstown. But the big cruise ships pass it by and the Pan-American planes, since there is no traffic to St. Vincent, zoom past a mile above. . . . Perhaps it is as well. If visitor's enthusiasms were too widely distributed through the West Indian archipelago the islands might come to resemble each other.

Kingstown is entirely charming. It stands at the head of a crater bay backed by magnificent green hills. The roofs of its houses are red-tiled, the walls are tinted through a range of pastel shades and there is a profusion of trees and flowering vines. The atmosphere of Kingstown is one of peace and breeding.

St. Vincent's development as a colony was slow, and though the island was harried during the quarrelsome eighteenth century by the persistent conflicts between France and England, few of the economic blows that so badly bruised many of the other islands fell on it. St. Vincent is not a sugar island and it was settled long after tobacco had ceased to be a profitable West Indian crop. It therefore has had no great boom periods nor ever suffered the smash and degradation that elsewhere followed them.

St. Vincent grows Sea Island cotton of a special excellence that in normal times commands a high price on the English

market, and, of all things, arrowroot, that starchy vegetable that in its final form goes into biscuits and babies. Trade though never brisk, is sufficiently profitable. Due to the variety of soils and altitudes, food crops are plentiful. The budget, with a little straining, balances. . . .

The background of the island is rather curious. Like Dominica, St. Vincent was a Carib stronghold for more than a century and a half after the rest of the Caribbees had been taken over by Europeans. Its steep coast, hidden ravines and obscure forests made it almost impossible of penetration. But even before white encroachment had forced them back, the Caribs had become divided.

In 1675 a ship with a cargo of slaves from African Guinea was wrecked on the St. Vincent coast. The blacks who survived, fresh from Africa, found themselves in a land and beneath a sun not unlike their own; among a strange people whose culture nevertheless was not wholly unfamiliar to them. The white men who survived the wreck were killed, but the blacks were given haven. In a few generations a cross-breed, separate tribe had evolved. They were called the Black Caribs and soon, strangely, they had dominated the purer strain. A habit of incessant war grew up between the two. It served the imperial purpose well. Both French and English encouraged the division; gradually the numbers of both black and red Caribs were reduced.

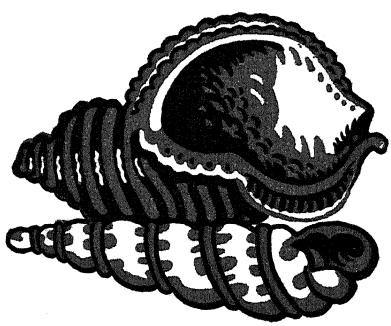
But, divided though they were, they remained formidable antagonists until the last. Not until 1796 was the island made wholly safe for European settlement. In that year a British expedition under Sir Ralph Abercromby, one of the important figures of West Indian history, organized a concerted attack

on St. Vincent and five thousand Carib captives were deported to the island of Ruatan in the Bay of Honduras, off the coast of Central America. Those few who remained have been absorbed by intermarriage with the plantation Negroes.

The choice of occupations offered St. Vincent visitors is wide. Slow, observant sauntering through the Kingstown streets is as rewarding as it always is in the towns of the West Indies—more than commonly so, for the picturesqueness of Windward Island ports does not depend on dirt.

There is an excellent bathing beach at "The Villa," three and a half miles out of town, and others at several points along the coast nearby. Motor drives in any direction that the roads lead are almost uniformly beautiful. The most striking is probably that along the windward coast. . . . From a height one looks over the string of the Grenadines, green and earth-red little islands that dot the shining sea between St. Vincent and Grenada, its next neighbor to the south.

Rounding the lower end of the island, the road turns north



along the Atlantic coast. . . . There is a cliché that such-and-such a view "beggars description." This phrase is apt. There is a quality of exhilaration and excitement in a landscape in the verdant tropics where mountains and ocean meet that is quite impossible to convey.

Near Kingstown is another Botanical Garden, the oldest, indeed, in the new world. It was for the enrichment of the St. Vincent Garden that Captain Bligh made his famous trip on the ill-fated *Bounty*. No one who can read or go to the movies nowadays is ignorant of the story of the *Bounty*, of the heroic voyage of Bligh and his men in an open boat, and of the establishment of the mutineer colony on the lost island of Pitcairn in the South Pacific. What is less well remembered is what it was all about.

There were various food plants—particularly the breadfruit tree—that grew in the Pacific Islands that were then unknown in the West Indies. As a means of meeting the problem of feeding the plantation slaves, Bligh was commissioned to collect seeds, plants and cuttings and fetch them round the Horn to Kingstown, from whence, after acclimatization, they were to be distributed to the other British West Indian colonies. The delay was great, but Bligh finally completed his errand. After the settlement of the *Bounty* difficulties he was recommissioned in the *Providence* and finished the task without further event.

In 1902, on the day before the disastrous eruption of Morne Pelée on Martinique, the volcano of St. Vincent, a savage pile of a mountain that fills the whole northern end of the island, erupted with unparalleled violence. A deep lake that filled the

crater of the Soufrière was boiled away into the sky in tremendous clouds of steam, followed by the full incredible range of a volcanic display—a day of utter blackness, violent electric storms, a pall of fine ash that sifted ankle deep over the whole region, black rain, immense and terrible explosions. Had there been a St. Pierre nearby the Martinique disaster would have been repeated. As it was, two thousand lives were lost, even on sparsely populated St. Vincent. Undoubtedly the two eruptions were connected—quite literally connected—by some huge channel of fire and force beneath the sea.

The Soufrière crater today is once more quiet. The sides of the caldera, burnt into their present shape by the 1902 eruption, drop sheer down from the crater rim for sixteen hundred feet to a clear lake. The trip to the Soufrière may be made by launch, car, and foot in two days' round trip from Kingstown without very great effort. Every yard of it is beautiful, dramatic and deeply memorable.

. . . Incidentally, St. Vincent is amazingly inexpensive. There are a few beach cottages that may be rented for thirty-five dollars a month. Good servants cost six dollars a month, and a sailing boat with a guide is usually available for about six dollars a week! Other prices are comparably low.

. . . . . .

Statistics sometimes are remarkably revealing. In the Windward Island of Grenada, sixty-eight miles south of St. Vincent, there are fourteen thousand privately owned farms of less than five acres and only 404 holdings of over ten acres. Those seem unexciting figures. . . . Translated into terms of

human freedom, decency and happiness they are beyond counting.

The landless blacks of St. Kitts are stupid, indolent and dirty. The small peasant proprietors of Grenada are intelligent, clean and energetic. There is no great wealth on the island and no great poverty. An air of ease pervades it.

Grenada, the administrative capital of the Windward Island group, has a character similar to its fellows, but a character much tamed and softened. Grenada is smaller than the rest. It is mountainous and volcanic, but the forces of earth that built it have long been quiet and none of its mountains are tall. The plan of Grenada is vast and rugged, but the vastness and ruggedness have been reduced by some divine Japanese gardener to comfortable, *gemütlich* tinyness.

St. George's, the port town, is built on both sides of a rocky promontory that encloses one side of a jade-green bay called the Careenage—a place, that is for the "careening," the beaching, tilting and scraping of ships—and, as is proper for the miniature port of a miniature place, no large vessels can enter. Hulking ships, like oafish giants forbidden a child's garden, must wait outside. Little, single-masted sailing ships, rowboats and a launch or two, lie primly, safely inside the bay at anchor or moored to an old stone landing stage.

The St. George's streets go up or down, most of them are narrow, all are white and all are clean. Lest the steep climb up over the promontory and down the other side become too wearisome, a hole has been dug right through. On the inner side is the green cup of the bay, the greyer, older buildings of the past. On the outer side is the rest of St. George's, along a dark sand shore and up the slopes behind it.

St. George's is a busy place, very full indeed of carts and cars and children. But, though it is thronged, it somehow stops short of being crowded. One has a sense that its five thousand people live in it because it is irresistible, not because they must or through any sort of misfortune. Nowhere else does the red of tiles and flowers seem so very red, or greens so green, or white so prismatically pure. One expects the Merry Villagers at any moment to break into a chorus, or a tenor in a naval uniform to appear upon one of the absurd little balconies and burst into an *aria.* . . . You find yourself walking about grinning amiably for no reason at all.

The interior of the island has the same toy quality. Its roads are macadamized and excellent. But they are hardly wider than a single car. They wind over giant and frowning ranges and skirt immense and precipitous valleys. But the ranges and valleys are really nothing of the sort. They are, except for the look of them, and their relation to each other, in reality quite small. They are merely pretending. One can walk over three Grenada mountains and two valleys in an hour.

A favorite objective for motorists is the Grand Etang. It is a fresh water lake in a defunct crater high among the hills.

"Dead crater" and "mountain lake" sound sinister. The Grand Etang should be a moving scenic experience. It isn't. It is a mild little pond, calm and lonely under the noon sun. A worthy writer of a West Indian guide, put to it to provide his clients with some memorable excitement in the course of their visit to the Grand Etang suggests that "By creeping through immense tree-ferns from five to six feet high near the Rest House, one can see the spot where His Majesty King George V, then Prince George, and his brother, Prince Al-

bert Victor, were entertained on January 29, 1880, in a pretty sort of al fresco hall erected of bamboo and palm leaves . . . now densely overgrown with bush." . . . In other words, if one takes the trouble, one can see the very place where two young gentlemen of royal blood sixty years ago ate sandwiches!

It is an adventure which cannot be too warmly recommended. It is so faultlessly Grenadian!

Along the way both up and down are tiny waterfalls and clear streams that bubble busily among smooth grey stones. Beside them, under queer wind-formed tropic trees are little one-roomed peasant's huts on crooked legs. If the morning is fine, as through the winter season it almost always is, those passing tourists with any youth or spirit left in them are audibly wondering in chorus why on earth they don't move into one of them at once and forget cities, job and taxes forevermore.

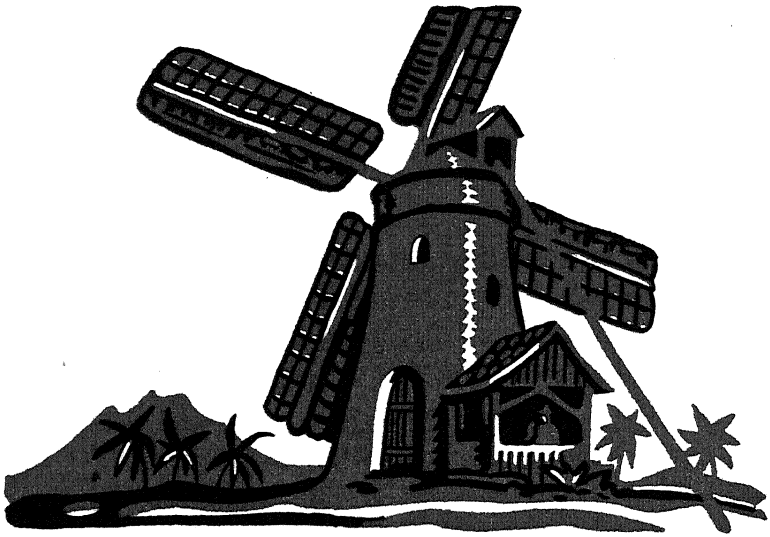
If a ship is in, the country people in their cleanest, brightest-colored ginghams, turn out in force along the road. Their endeavor is to sell to the tourists . . . well, anything; bunches of wildflowers, green nutmegs, mangoes, tangerines, limes, cocoa pods, all the profuse and perfumed produce of the land. With the bright bunches, fruits and garlands in their hands they add materially to the view. They ask little—and since most travellers never part with two cents if one cent can be made to do—usually get less. But they laugh a great deal about it.

Sometimes Carib stone axe-heads are offered. The Grenada peasants, repeating a curiously widespread folk belief of many regions of the world, believe that they fall from the sky

during storms and they call them "thunderstones." The fact, of course, is that heavy downpours wash them from their age-old concealment in the earth. A purchaser with an inclination for curios need have no fears that the axe heads are not genuine. The Caribs held the Grenada hills until the end of the eighteenth century, and the tools they made and lost down through the ages were myriad. Nor have the friendly black men of Grenada as yet gone in for the faking of antiques—particularly ones of smoothed hard stone!

At Grand Anse Bay, around the headland to the south of St. George's, is a magnificent white sand beach, provided with a pier and bath houses. . . . Quite horribly, whenever any of the large tour ships are in, a majority of the passengers go straight to it in launches from the steamer and return just as directly, having, in the short time at their disposal, omitted all the rest of the not inconsiderable island of Grenada. Taste, of course, is a matter of taste. But one wonders. A glimpse of Grenada does not take very long. And one can always *return* to Grand Anse Bay. . . .

Life, after all, began in the sea. The first, most primitive forms of being oozed and dribbled upward upon the first evolutionary ledge at the line where earth and ocean met. Now, since life has grown so difficult, a certain percentage of mortals, it seems, feeling unequal to it all, are oozing back. . . .



XIII — *BARBADOES*

BARBADOES has the remarkable distinction of *not* having been discovered by Christopher Columbus. The island lies some distance east of the reef-like line of the Lesser Antilles, so the Admiral somehow missed it. An anonymous Portuguese caravel is supposed to have touched Barbadoes at some time during the second quarter of the sixteenth century. But they stopped just long enough to name it "Los Barbudos" —after some bearded fig trees that they noted growing by the shore—then went away. In 1605 a Kentish gentleman came by and carved with the point of his dagger on a tree: "James K. of E. and of this Island," and twenty years later, due to the flattering stories of Barbadoes his crew took home, a colony

was founded. That, substantially, is all Barbadoes' history. The island has been English without interruption ever since.

In 1626 the population of Barbadoes was forty, in 1650 its population was thirty thousand. Now, within the confining space of Barbadoes' 166 square miles, there somehow manages to exist a population of 175,000. Barbadoes has become one of the most densely settled countries in the world.

Such an extraordinary growth, of course, was due to sugar.

Sugar meant slavery and slavery made for conservatism. From the beginning the land was closely held. Barbadoes is flat and of coralline construction, but its porous limestone is overlaid with a layer of thick rich earth so it is perfect cane country. Poor settlers were soon succeeded by rich ones, by men who had money to fetch black slaves from Africa by tens of thousands. For generations the sugar profits were enormous. Slaves were relatively cheap, and since Barbadoes, baked by a clear sun and cooled by perpetual strong winds from the northeast, is one of the healthiest places conceivable, even men who worked from six to six under an overseer's lash lived long and useful lives. In the middle of the eighteenth century it was estimated that a Barbadoes sugar plantation of two hundred acres was capable, under good management, of producing an income of $100,000 a year.

Emancipation in 1838 had some effect on dividends, but far less than on other islands. Freedom was not followed, as elsewhere, by any reprehensible but well-earned idleness. On Barbadoes it brought the blacks no rest. There was scarcely an acre of the Barbadian land where a free Negro could build a hut of his own or till a garden patch. So, perforce, they went

on working. A miserably tiny wage was set. After one hundred years it has not been appreciably raised.

The Barbadian Negroes are wretchedly, grotesquely poor, for the earnings of the sugar acres, those that are not at once taken by the whites who live on the island, must be sent to stockholders abroad. . . . A Barbadian lady once told me that she had never been able to induce the servants in her house to use a rag for dusting or for floor washing. No torn, faded fragment of cloth was in their eyes too poor not to be worthy of some better use, of being made into some queer garment of patches for a friend or a child. For household use they devise ingenious whisks and pads of fresh leaves. . . . Many "Ba'juns" would look on a torn flour sack as a dowry, a discarded, ragged bedsheet as a trousseau.

Yet the vast Barbadian population, fighting, scrambling for toe-hold on the very edge of destitution, is marked by a vigor, a shrewd wit, a quick intelligence, and an alert physical energy that sets them apart from all the other islanders. The Barbadians are typically somewhat lean and tall and their skins are a gleaming, healthy black. Most manifestly, the Negroes are ideally fitted for survival in the hot tropics. The struggle for existence on Barbadoes, instead of destroying them, seems indeed to have wrought an actual improvement.

They are not content. Occasionally even black men weary of a top wage of $2.50 a week for cane cutting during a short season and recently there was a period of serious rioting. But since Barbadoes officially still regards labor agitation as a felony and deals with strikes with a machine gun, the trouble was short-lived. . . . Yet Barbadians are famously patriotic,

intensely, bumptiously proud of their island and their Englishness.

. . . There is a story that in those shadowed days of early August, 1914, when the ultimatum had been sent to Germany, a reassuring cablegram came to the Prime Minister's office in London. It said, simply: "Go ahead England Barbadoes is behind you."

Barbadoes is shaped like a neatly trimmed pork chop. It is not indented by natural harbors, but since the wind almost invariably comes from one direction the traffic of ships that visit the island find adequate shelter in the slight inward dip of Carlisle Bay on the southwestern coast.

A steamer is greeted with the crowds and clamor of Barbadoes long before it reaches the anchorage. The jewel-green sea is flecked with flotillas of little red-sailed boats fishing the banks beyond the island. Native pilots and their crews sometimes row miles out to flag approaching ships and offer pilotage. They are almost invariably rebuffed. . . . Before the hook is down in Carlisle Bay small craft have swarmed around it in such quantities as effectively to carpet the nearby sea. . . . . Diving boys are common through the islands; they provide an indispensable note. But nowhere are they so numerous or so proficient as at Bridgetown, Barbadoes. In no other port that I know of may one see the remarkable feat of a man diving from the boat deck of a large liner swimming under its keel and coming up safely on the other side.

Dozens of shinily painted little rowboats come out to bid for the privilege of taking passengers ashore. They are somewhat over-staffed. Besides the rowers there is a superior gentleman who acts as barker and general rowboat business

manager. Long before passengers can leave the ship he begins his bid for their trade, trying to catch their eyes as they stand by the rail, calling, gesticulating. An eye caught, the rowboat captain holds up a board with the name of his craft painted on it—usually entwined with flags—points to it and exacts a nodded promise. The names are memorable. "*Nelsons*" and "*Rodneys*" are common. My favorite was a jaunty ten-foot skiff named the "*H.M.S. Indefensible.*"

The moment the harbor authorities have cleared the ship, vendors of every sort scramble up the companionway. . . . A unique Barbadian phenomenon are the laundry women who come to the ships—in far greater numbers than are ever allowed aboard. They are colored women, of course, cleanly dressed in the voluminous clothes of an earlier fashion. They will take your clothes, suits and all, in the late morning when a ship arrives and return them in perfect shape before it sails on the afternoon of the same day. To part with half one's wardrobe under such a meager guarantee is a nerve-wracking experience, but the Bridgetown washer ladies are scrupulously honest. They will not let you sail denuded.

There are sellers of coconuts, of mangoes, of seashells, of necklaces made of shining red, grey and brown seeds, all in shouting yet cheerful competition. . . . And invariably there is some passenger giving his mind a good long rest who smiles and shakes his head—as he observes this day-long expenditure of tremendous energy under the roasting Ba'jun sun—and remarks on Negro idleness. Pleasantly, he concludes that all these vociferous scrabblers for pence and ha'pence do it for the sheer fun of it and to avoid more "honest" work. They are such "happy-go-lucky" folk, these blacks. They "take no

thought of tomorrow." . . . Perhaps not, for they are very busy indeed today. Tonight's banana and handful of rice take quite thought and care enough.

The streets of Bridgetown—it is a city of nearly fifteen thousand people—are coral white, always crowded, always noisy. The boats and launches that come in from the outer anchorage enter the narrow Careenage and passengers disembark at a stone landing stair. The forest of masts beyond are in an inner harbor for schooners, lighters, and small boats of all descriptions. There are often so many of them that no water is visible. There is a whir of activity, both sensed and seen, like the stir within a hive.

The town begins across a busy bridge over a river. Nelson, looking rather slight and unhappy in green bronze, stands in Trafalgar Square. To the left is Broad Street and the shops. Some of them are stocked with such peculiarly British products as Kent brushes, Dunhill pipes, doeskin-by-the-yard and woolen sweaters. The wide windows, dressed with encyclopaedic thoroughness rather than talent, contain an abundance of postcards, bits of coral and queer aquatic souvenirs. Prices are somewhat—though not hysterically—less than at home.

Broad Street in one particular has never failed to startle me. It begins so busily, with such a bang and air that one thinks to saunter down it for an hour. Then, almost at once, it is over. The great crowds of Barbadoes are deceptive. Not one in any hundred in the Broad Street throng has the wherewithal to buy anything, so shops are relatively few.

Beyond the end of Broad Street one begins to see Bridgetown. If one has walked with any velocity, one is apt to see an exhausting lot of it. Bridgetown was laid out by a maze-maker

who had been drinking. A stranger becomes promptly and completely lost in it. It is no misfortune. There is no better way to see a unique and often fascinating city. When the time comes to seek Trafalgar Square again, there will be never less than a hundred people within hail to give advice.

Several streets are lined on both sides by sidewalk food markets. Large black ladies engaged in uninterrupted high-pitched conversation with friends at a great distance preside over neat rows and piles of tropic fruits and vegetables. For each customer there are ten onlookers. Automobiles and burro-drawn little two-wheeled carts prod one perilously in the rear. There is much loud and unintelligible comment on one's personal appearance.

Though the crowd is poor it is at least immensely cheerful about it, and it is rare to see anyone, particularly children and women, who do not look as if their simple clothes had not come just that moment from the washtub and the ironing-board. Everything, one notes, is carried on the head—a basket of live chickens, a crate of eggs, a sack of oranges, shoes. Barbadians, forced into the worldwide effort to keep up with the Jones's, most of them now own shoes, at least for state occasions. But they are not wasteful. A Ba'jun will carry her footgear on her head to the threshold of the funeral or party she is attending, then sit on the doorstep at the last minute and put them on.

The head-carrying trick has the advantage of leaving both hands free for gestures or other business. It becomes a fixed habit. I once had a letter to be delivered. The youth to whom I entrusted it found a brick, put the letter on his head, weighted it down with the brick and set forth.

The narrow slum streets of Bridgetown, and they are in the great majority, are lined at both sides by one-room shacks. The huts are usually raised off the ground on posts and a front

door is reached by a few ladder-like steps. A house ten feet wide and fifteen feet deep would somewhat exceed the average. In such a dwelling there are frequently from five to fifteen regular inhabitants of all ages and both sexes. It is small wonder they overflow in the road outside and into the billiard-

table area of yard behind. Yet most houses are painted at least once in a generation and though there is some litter round them there is no filth. Faded greys and pinks and blues predominate in the colors of the walls and wherever a foot of empty earth is left, some plant or tree grows from it. There is none of the ugliness, little of the beaten, broken finality one feels in northern city slums.

Barbadoes is one of the few places in the West Indies regularly visited by tourists who come direct from England. The sun of Barbadoes is marvellous and steady and the trade winds over the flat land keep temperatures comfortably low. There are excellent hotels and bathing beaches at several places round the coast and if a voyager has come supplied with introductions there is a considerable Barbadian society. Most such visitors find Barbadoes charming. There is scarcely an acre on the island that is not tame and trim. Roads are good, prices are moderate. The black Barbadian population exists as an impersonal, amusing background for a detached and leisured holiday. They are excellent servants. The hotels have so many there is always one within call. And white Barbadian families are beautifully cared for.

I once saw a lady and her little girl downtown in Bridgetown shopping. There were three male servants with them to carry the small parcels and a colored woman to carry the child's rag doll. It is pleasant to be princely when trained labor may be had for two dollars a week.

. . . . . .

Though the Barbadoes countryside is almost wholly planted in sugar—(where the twelve hundred-a-square-mile manage

to find foothold when most of the square miles that one sees are fields of cane is a complete mystery)—it is by no means unbeautiful. Though there are no hills on the island except one brief pile of them in a district appropriately called Scotland in the northeast, most of Barbadoes at least is gently rolling. It has some of the atmosphere of the English Home Counties, a look of being lived in, an air of long and comfortable peace. A characteristic detail of the Barbadian scene are tall stone windmills with immense, four-bladed sails. In the past they were used to grind cane, and happily, now that machinery has replaced them, many have nevertheless been left standing. Though cane means general treelessness, the old stone plantation houses stand in pleasant groves on tops of hills overlooking the estates and royal palms are sometimes planted by the roads.

It is a peculiarity of Barbadoes that it has no surface water, though an adequate supply comes from tapping underground sources. Nor—except for one patch of woodland on the east coast in which a few imported monkeys and parrots are supposed to thrive—has Barbadoes any forests. Those who have come to the Caribbean in search of some sense of adventure, for at least the visual adventure of the wild beauty of the tropics, therefore find Barbadoes disappointing. It is frankly, boastfully mild. Its charms are nice charms, for nice people.

The Eastern, windward coast, being more whipped and rugged, is largely neglected by the nice. From a road ending called Hackleton's Cliff there is a famous view down a precipitous hillside to a long vista of shore where the waves of the Atlantic crash in a long line of foam. American tourists delight in it. True Barbadoes visitors who winter on the island,

regard the scene, I suspect, as being somewhat too exuberant, too "natural" to be in quite good taste. They prefer the excellent hotels in the suburb of Hastings, near Bridgetown, where the beaches are of white untroubled sand and the Caribbean laps more gently.

The cliffs extend along more than five miles of the windward coast. Some two miles south of the "view" is the parish church of St. John's. . . . The church is simple and old and few anywhere can be more exquisitely situated. It stands in a garden-grove of ancient trees. The wind from the wide sea laughs eternally around it. The sun is tempered with shade and white clouds run by forever in a sky of turquoise blue. From the edge of the churchyard one looks down terraced cliffs to the sea. It is told that a vicar of St. John's once resigned his office because the parish was too beautiful. Its beauty, he said, set him too much apart from life, from the suffering and pain he must remember if he would serve his God.

In the churchyard is the tomb of a queer wanderer out of history. His name was Ferdinando Paleologus. He was a vestryman of St. John's, Barbadoes, for twenty years, and a churchwarden, and he died in the parish in 1678. With him ended on that far off island in the sea the last of the name and the house that ruled as Emperors at Byzantium.

The Roman Empire of the East—that in its final centuries was known as Byzantine—survived for a thousand years after the city of Rome was lost. The Imperial frontiers grew ever narrower, but the ancient capital of Constantine above the Golden Horn remained impregnable. The last of the dynasties that ruled it was the Paleologus, and when the city fell to

the Turks in 1453 the then Emperor fled to Rome and put himself under the protection of the Pope. As the generations passed the family became obscure and poor. Nothing remained to them except their resounding name. The father of the churchwarden of St. John's had married an Englishwoman and was buried in Cornwall. Ferdinando, the last of them all, the inheritor through fifteen centuries of the Augustan throne, lived out the long quiet years under the Barbadoes sun. The throne of Byzantium had been taken from the Paleologus kings by conquest, so, by the tradition of empire their claim was still valid. In the tomb of Ferdinando by St. John's lies the ultimate dust of Rome.

. . . . . .

There are 480 miles of motor road on Barbadoes, so those on whom its spell is cast can go on exploring almost endlessly.

Not far from St. John's church is Codrington College, the oldest institution of its kind in the West Indies. Codrington was founded in the eighteenth century with the virtuous objective of perpetuating the teaching of "Divinity, Physic and Chirurgery" and, with many changes and vicissitudes, has continued ever since. The simple, attractive college buildings stand by a formal pond planted with lilies and around it are tall cabbage palms. Codrington, on an island where at least a halting effort is made to preserve some line of demarcation between the races, is conspicuously color blind. Its handful of students, some of whom have come from other islands, range through all shades. But they are alike in the possession of easy, pleasant manners and in complete lack of self-consciousness. The Codrington students wear the loose black gowns of an

older academic tradition, they sit on windowsills, on cool porches, or sprawl on the shady lawns to study, with an almost Athenian ease. One feels that Codrington must be a very pleasant place to get one's education. But academic life grows dull, even under the best of circumstances. Strangers are welcome, as sheer curiosities. Those who arrive in large groups are merely eyed interestedly from a distance. A single visitor who wanders from the rest is apt to be surrounded with a courteous, though firm, circle of students who will straightway interview him.

What was my name? Where was I from? . . . Obviously. (The Codrington students speak the most English English, slurred with the odd accents of Barbadoes. My simple American was not too clearly understood.) Did I like Barbadoes? Why?

"What do you do?"

"I am a writer."

My questioner seemed disappointed, fell back a step and was silent.

One of his comrades took up the conversation with another question. "And what sort of thing did I write?"

The first started and came abruptly to life. "Oooo! Oooo! I misunderstood you! A writer! I thought you said a *ratter!*"

Feeling a most inadequate Pied Piper, I stumbled off. We seemed to be getting nowhere. . . .

. . . . . .

. . . Occasionally, wandering through Barbadoes, one is surprised to encounter shabby, barefoot whites. They are typical

"po' white trash" and the tale of them is more tragic than that of their compeers in the American south.

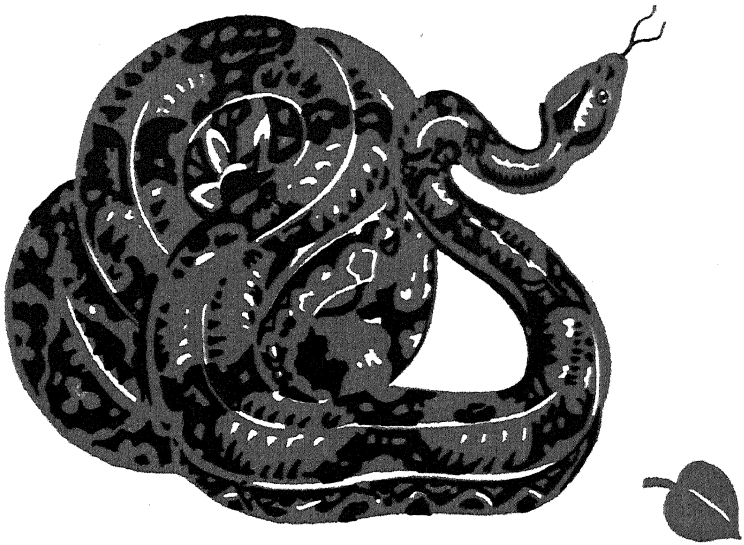
Between the date of the Discovery and the belated prohibition of the slave trade in the nineteenth century, it has been estimated that more than 3,500,000 Negro men and women where taken in their native Africa and brought to the West Indies. Even as late as 1776 there were still 192 slave trading vessels registered under the British flag alone . . . that ugliest and bitterest of tales is known. It is less familiar that during most of that period, in Virginia, in Louisiana, and in the West Indies, there were white slaves as well.

Planters could buy debtors and petty criminals out of prison. These friendless, utterly defenseless beings were then bound over for a period of years while they worked out their purchase money and the cost of their passage out. They were outside the law, at the entire mercy of their masters. Usually they were set the hardest tasks on the plantations and were driven even more mercilessly than the blacks, beneath whom, in the social order of the period, they actually ranked. The theory, of course, was that when a white slave had served his time he would find himself in the free new world where he could acquire land and set up for himself. What, in the course of that endeavor, he was to use for money for his first day's bread as a freeman, was not very clearly worked out.

Such derelicts reached the other islands mostly in ones and twos. Barbadoes received large and definite allotments of them. During the Commonwealth a number of Irish prisoners of war were sent by Oliver Cromwell to St. Kitts and Montserrat, and a large number of English royalists were deported

to Barbadoes. If one could suspect so dour a gentleman as Oliver of humor, this would be the time for it.

The rich, slave-sweating planters of Barbadoes were naturally most ardent Royalists. At the beginning of the Civil War in England many wealthy adherents of the Stuart party had come to Barbadoes and acquired land. Later, when Charles' empty head had been parted from his body, with loss to himself but none to his kingdom, Oliver Cromwell sent the less fortunate Royalists out to Barbadoes after them to be sold as bondsmen for seven years. The Royalist Ba'juns were put to an ironic test. These shackled creatures that were shipped to them were many of them officers, clergymen, gentlemen, and of their own beloved party. But they had no money. The gentlemen of Barbadoes found they could do no more for them than buy them. . . . Many died, a few of the most resolute escaped to join the pirates, the rest grew thin and silly and lived on. Their descendants today are called "Redlegs." They live apart in dwindling numbers and are the most destitute folk on the island.



XIV — *TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO*

BARBADOES is a coral island and lies to the east of the bent bow of the Lesser Antilles. Trinidad, and its dependency of Tobago, are separated from Grenada, to the north, by the longest stretch of open sea that divides any of the island stepping stones on down from Cuba, and is separated from the South American mainland by only a narrow strait of sea. Geologically Trinidad has been detached from South America for so relatively short a time that in all essentials it is still part of the continent. In the forests of Trinidad there are monkeys, armadillos, ocelots, agouti, a species of South American deer, the wild hogs called peccaries, boa constrictors, bushmasters, coral snakes, crocodiles. Not many, it is

true, of any one kind but all are actually discoverable. Many species of mainland bird such as the big-billed toucan and sixteen different kinds of humming bird, make themselves thoroughly at home on the island. Its botany is that of the vast Guiana forests to the south. In Trinidad one reaches a more solid and enduring world. The dream quality of the smaller islands is absent, with it some of the impalpable mood of melancholy that touches some of them.

Trinidad, fourteen hundred and fifty sea miles away is farther from New York than any of the islands. With that its remoteness ceases. No other West Indian is served by ships from so many countries. In the harbor of Port of Spain * one can take passage to Buenos Aires, to Panama, to France, England, Germany, Holland, India or Australia. Trinidad's situation makes it a way point on many routes, its activities branch to many lands beyond the Caribbean area.

In the composition of its population Trinidad is cosmopolitan. . . . The island is fifty miles long and forty wide so it has room enough for the 430,000 people who live on it. The majority, of course, are Negroes. But when the importation of blacks from Africa was forbidden the English Trinidadian planters, still hungry for cheap labor, turned to British India. Beginning in 1845, under a contract between the two governments, Indian peasant class families were brought to Trinidad

* Some travellers are deeply confused by the name of the capital of a British colony being Port of Spain. The fact is, the island was Spanish from its discovery and naming by Columbus until its conquest by the British in 1797 and the old appellation stuck. The taking of Trinidad was a peculiarly easy matter, for by invitation of the Spanish government the island had recently been inundated by French royalist settlers from Haiti and the French islands and they were wholly without any sense of allegiance to Spain. The surrender to the British forces was immediate and the English occupancy was never thereafter challenged.

under a system of indenture. They signed contracts to work at a certain wage for a fixed number of years. Their interests were guarded by the Indian government and there was some regulation of the conditions under which they worked in Trinidad. At the expiration of their contracts the Indian emigrants had the choice of being repatriated at the expense of the government or of taking up free holdings of land and remaining in Trinidad. The majority, having nothing to go back to except the slums of Calcutta or Madras and the hopeless restrictions placed on their caste, made the second choice and stayed on. The indenture arrangement remained in force until 1917. There are now more than a hundred thousand East Indians permanently resident on Trinidad.

As short a time as ten years ago they were a colorful and wholly distinct group. Public education in Trinidad has never been brisk and a great number of the Hindus spoke no English. The costumes of the Peninsula were commonplace. Ancient fakirs in white turbans and voluminous shirts and loincloths sat at the edges of the sidewalks and scratched themselves and chatted as naturally as if they were in the gutters of Hydarabad. Young women with lean, dark faces carried babies astride their hips and wore long cerise and magenta scarfs, gold ornaments fixed through their left nostrils and lumbering quantities of beaten silver bracelets on their arms. The Indians lived in districts of their own, attended their own mosques or temples—depending on their faith—and generally kept apart from their Negro neighbors.

To some extent all that is true today. Indian costumes are still seen in the city streets, several sections of the island are preponderantly Hindu, and most British Indians have retained

their racial purity. But nowadays khaki trousers are commoner than those monstrously inconvenient drawers that were the older fashion, most Indians chatter away in the rapid, oddly accented English of the blacks, and the two breeds are getting on splendidly. . . . One gathers from the tint and features of a numerous younger generation, getting on by night as well as day.

If the change makes Trinidad less colorfully cosmopolitan, (there is also a considerable Chinese population—apparently all selling groceries) the merging makes Trinidad more Trinidadian. . . . That statement sounds merely inane, but there really is a point concealed in it.

The smaller West Indian islands, though all are marked by individual characteristics, remain colonies—offshoots and dependencies. Trinidad is acquiring the character of a nation, with its own attitudes, its own temperament, problems and habits. The island therefore becomes more tangible, more three-dimensional. Picturesqueness and quaintness may pall. A national character cannot.

. . . . . .

The approach to Trinidad by sea is ruggedly beautiful. Ships that come in at dawn have learned to rout out their passengers so they may stand on deck with hair on end and dishevelled bathrobes wound about them and witness the full spectacle.

Trinidad is generally rectangular in shape, with its northwestern and southwestern points pulled out to within sight of the hills of South America. Beyond the northern point is a string of precipitous small islands and the passages between

them are called the Bocas del Dragon—the Dragon's mouths.

Steamers, at reduced speed, pass into the Gulf of Paria between vertical cliffs of crumbling grey and red stone. The action of wind and water has pocked them in caves and ledges where sea birds nest. Several vacation colonies nestle on the nearby hills and along strips of sandy shore. Turning east, the ship passes a number of islands in the Gulf. One is a leper colony, one is the official cure place of the Trinidad Constabulary, a prison is on another. The rest are devoted to the villas of prosperous Trinidadians, and on a tiny islet called Gasparee is a favored week-end hotel named Point Baleine—used, with many changes, by Mr. Noel Coward as the locale of his play of a few seasons ago "*Point Valaine.*"

The city of Port of Spain lies in a great spreading plain backed by high mountains. Until very recently there has not been sufficient depth for ships to go to wharves and larger vessels must still anchor well out in the Gulf. The delta of the Orinoco River is not far away on the South American coast and the endless deposits of mud that pour down from it have made the Gulf of Paria shallow—and usually a murky brown.

An arrival is greeted at the Custom's House jetty by the impact of a city. Hotel porters, taxi drivers and souvenir peddlers are present in their legions. But, unlike Barbadoes, theirs has more the appearance of a legitimate busy-ness. It is on a lower, more familiar key. There is little of the stridency, the clamor of desperation, that underlies the similar scene at Bridgetown. The hotel porters, incidentally, represent many and legitimate establishments. There are more comfortable,

habitable places to stay in Port of Spain than in any of the islands from Jamaica south.

One of them, The Queen's Park, facing an immense Savannah at the back of town, is one of the famous inns of the American tropics. The Queen's Park is old and it verges on shabbiness. But its broad verandah and its great open air dining room have for a generation been one of the classic meeting places of the West Indies. Passing tourists, in for the day, throng it in their hundreds, fit easily into its pleasant scheme, and, to their visible satisfaction, fail to dominate it. The Q.P. is a place for "regulars." Planters and business men, fliers and experienced voyagers come to it. Nowhere else does one realize so clearly that despite the changing times and the multiplicity and variety of the islands, there is still a compact, special Caribbean world, with interests, purposes and friendships of its own.

There are other hotels with equally good accommodations. Suitcases and one's future are safe in the hands of almost any porter with an appropriately marked cap. Travellers can stay in Trinidad as well as look at it.

Beyond the Custom's House and a stretch of batteringly bright sunlight, is a wide, tree-planted boulevard called Marine Square. From it, in straight lines inland, extend the main streets of Port of Spain.

The most important is Frederick Street. On it, in queer, old-fashioned wooden buildings with upstairs balconies, and doors so wide they leave nearly all of the shop-fronts open, are the best stores in the Antilles. They have some of the air of a country "general store" of a past time. A New York or London merchant would regard the encyclopaedic display of goods in

windows and on counters, hooks, stands, and walls as profuse rather than tasteful. But a competent shopper can usually find what he—or, more correctly, she—wants. Few voyagers get as far as Trinidad without discovering that the oddities sold them as "Tropical" at home serve hardly any other purpose than marking the wearer TOURIST as plainly as if he wore sandwich boards. Frederick Street is a well-equipped and not expensive place to acquire more appropriate garb. All of the larger merchants stock various British-made articles that are priced at rather lower figures than in the United States.

Interspersed among the European-style shops are a type of emporia that is typical of the southern Caribbean. They are called, locally, "Bombay Stores" and much good currency is left in them. There are some in Jamaica, several in Barbadoes, dozens in Port of Spain and literally hundreds of Bombay Stores in the Republic of Panama. Except that they vary in size, all are remarkably alike.

The Bombay Stores are run by British Indians, suave, competent brown gentlemen who rank well among the skilled tradesmen of the earth. There is a persistent rumor, loudly denied, that they are merely local managers of a great chain store organization with headquarters in India. The similarity of the stock carried makes the accusation credible. All carry modern Benares brassware; rayon shirts, pajamas, kimonos and dressing gowns, usually embroidered; less silk than is claimed; processions of miniature ebony and ivory elephants, both the ebony and ivory being open to question; beautifully executed Indian silverwork bracelets and necklaces; and antique Oriental jewelery. Though there is much that is not what it is said to be, a great deal of the stuff is interesting, and if searched

for diligently a few really lovely things can be discovered.

Bargaining is in order. The "asking price" is not final. . . . The least wearing method, if one is buying a number of things, is to make the selections without comment, assemble them, then dicker for the total. Bombay merchants, like other merchants, are interested in quantity sales and are open to reason. Though proprietors' ways of pricing differ—and they should not be abused if they are adamant—thirty and even forty per cent discounts are not uncommon.

Port of Spain is too large a city—its population is over sixty-five thousand—to be seen with any thoroughness on foot, even by the most resolute. But taxis are plentiful and clean open trolleys ply in all directions.

The quarter nearest the harbor, on both sides of Marine Square, is devoted chiefly to warehouses and the offices of produce merchants. The trundling of casks, the piles of swelling sacks, the barefoot Negro and Indian laborers, the queer dusty, aromatic smells that drift from the shadowy depths of the long buildings make even so prosaic a district interesting. Next come the shopping streets, then, farther inland, the residential districts.

The city faces the green mountains inland and turns its back to the sea. The plan is not illogical. Trinidad lies only ten degrees from the equator and the lower land by the Gulf is humid. Breezes come oftenest from the hills, so dependably that during the winter months all nights, at least, are delightfully cool.

Port of Spain has a unique possession in The Savannah, or Queen's Park, a trim grass meadow of one hundred seventy acres in extent lying at the base of the hills. On it are a race

course, a football field and several cricket pitches. The rest of the space, except for one area of formal garden and a few open groves of trees, is left to meadow. Several of the trees in the Queen's Park are among the most magnificent in the world. There is a species called *saman*, not wholly unlike the northern elm in shape, that attains a remarkable grandeur. A regiment could rest in the shade of one of them.

A trolley line goes part way round the Savannah—offering a cooling short ride at twilight—and the fine houses and better hotels of Port of Spain front on the boulevard that circles it. On the far side is the impressive bulk of Government House, residence of the Governor-General of the island—a post, by the way, that is ranked among the best in the British colonial service. Around it are the grounds of the Botanic Garden.

I have been in Port of Spain for short or longer stays half-a-dozen times and I have never failed to go on and walk in the garden once more. The Port of Spain Botanic Garden is exceptionally large and exceptionally well cared for. Much of it consists merely of grassy lawn traversed by footpaths, and there is a simple track that follow a trickle of a stream though a cool ravine, and another that climbs through the woods to a lookout commanding a magnificent view over the city. But each of the trees so casually set out is an exotic from some far corner of the tropics. One is the Amherstia of Burma, a shrub-like tree with pendant long dark leaves and hanging chandeliers of flame-rose, orchid-like flowers. Another is the Ceylon Willow, an immense shade tree whose branches drop down hairy appendages which, when they touch the ground, take root and quickly develop into secondary trunks which repeat the performance of the mother stem, so that in time a single

tree may cover many acres. There is a red-flowered flamboyant, a queer, twisted Pandanus or screw-pine, creaking, graceful bamboos of a number of varieties. The professional guides that are in attendance are, as least for one's first visit, worth their small fee. A greenhouse contains a large number of orchids. If one is fortunate enough to visit it when a great number of those most temperamental of plants is in bloom, the display is extraordinary.

Trinidad has half-a-dozen utterly distinct regions. On so large an island the number of trips and drives that may be taken is almost limitless.

Inasmuch as Trinidad has become a regular port of call for travellers from many parts of the world the business of showing it off has become organized. There are plenty of open cars and competent Negro or Indian chauffeurs who from long habit can answer most questions before they are asked. They know exactly what feature of the landscape or object by the road will produce a reaction. It is a convenient accomplishment, but habit, too, has made them orthodox in choice of routes.

A favorite trip is known as the drive "Over the Saddle." . . . First as a kind of religious duty, a stop is made at the works of the Angostura Bitters company in the center of town. The makers of that estimable dash moved from their place of origin in Venezuela during the last century and since that time have made their headquarters in Trinidad. They welcome tourists with great lavishness. Each is presented with a sample bottle of the bitters and a swizzle stick and the curious—to their grave disappointment—are shown over the factory. Since Angostura's recipe is a jealously guarded secret,

the factory consists of no more than a gloomy warehouse full of casks, one of which the sightseerer is privileged to smell. If depressed by this experience, however, recourse may be had to an excellent bar conducted by the firm where all drinks are *free*. A percentage of travellers never see anything more: at least, not clearly.

The way "Over the Saddle" then runs south out of the city. There is a glimpse of distant sugar fields and of a dreary and wretched slum largely inhabited by East Indians, then the route turns back into the hills. The rest is charming.

The road is most of it informal. It passes successively through cocoa estates, over streams nearly lost in magnificent arches of bamboo, and through a series of colorful suburban towns, to emerge at last on the hills above the city. If time is limited the Saddle drive provides a quick and efficient summary of a part, at least, of Trinidad.

Those with a day at their disposal are invariably urged to go to Pitch Lake. Pitch Lake is a bottomless natural deposit of asphalt—plain, ordinary road asphalt—on the south-western peninsula of the island and it is a unique Trinidad phenomenon. In theory at least it should be interesting. Unfortunately, except to the geologically-minded, it often isn't.

There is a tradition that Sir Walter Raleigh stopped once at Pitch Lake and caulked his ships with the bitumen he dug from it. For generations it has been known and admired as a curiosity of nature and since 1888 has been a source of valuable revenue to the Trinidad government. A corporation works the lake under a contract that runs until 1951 and guarantees the insular treasury an annual minimum of $120,000 —though in practice the royalty paid is usually double that.

Physically, Pitch Lake today is a 127-acre depression rather like an ugly black marsh. The nearly pure asphalt of which it is composed, due to some volcanic mixing of underground petroleum and earths, has risen in the form of immense solid bubbles flattened at the top. Between these bubbles are down-curving slits filled with rain water. The crude asphalt, hacked out by laborers with picks, is carried out of the "lake" in little iron hand carts that are moved to the area being worked on movable rails. Some take their loads to a refinery not far off where the natural thirty per cent of water is expressed and the asphalt is barrelled, the rest of the carts are hooked onto an aerial railway and are borne half a mile down a bare slope to dump their contents directly into the holds of waiting ships. The natural lumps resemble nothing quite so much as masses of black Swiss cheese.

Asphalt Lake, though years of excavation have lowered the original level, gradually replenishes itself. It, and most of the territory round it, is bare of vegetation. When the sun stares unblinkingly down on it Pitch Lake is one of the most roastingly hot places in the world. In the neighborhood is the big refinery, a row of shore bungalows occupied by the employees of the company, and nothing else whatever.

The Pitch Lake community is named La Brea and is fifty-seven miles from Port of Spain over the Southern Main Road, the busiest highway on the island. Most of the route lies through crowded towns and through flat sugar country and the return journey must be made over the same way. Sight-seers who go to Pitch Lake and back and nowhere else therefore come away with a most meager impression of the beauty and variety of the island.

The affection of the Trinidadians for the southern and western districts of their island is natural. It is there the money comes from.

The presence of Pitch Lake clearly indicated that there was oil in the neighborhood, and for years prospectors prodded hopefully. . . . In 1908 Trinidad's production of oil was thirty-seven barrels. In 1936 it was 13,237,030 barrels and Trinidad had become the most important oil field in the whole of the British Empire—though that is not quite so imposing as it sounds, for British oil properties are incredibly few. . . . The wells that have sprung up in Trinidad are nearly all in the southwestern quadrant.

But the district was economically important even before oil was dreamed of. Though Trinidad's crops are diversified, sugar's role is sufficiently important so that the livings of a hundred thousand people depend on it.

San Fernando, thirty-five miles south of Port of Spain and on the route to Pitch Lake, is the second city of the island and the focus of the sugar interest. There is otherwise not much to be said for it—but if one has come so far down the Caribbean and somehow still managed to avoid them, there are a number of great sugar factories nearby. One, by all means, should be visited.

The Usine Ste. Madeleine, four miles from San Fernando, is one of the greatest sugar mills in the world. With the decline in sugar's price on the world market, modern practice has been toward centralization. One big factory has proven in all ways more efficient than many little ones. The Usine Ste. Madeleine serves, apart from the main estate in which it centers, more than twelve thousand private Indian cane-

growers and the cane is brought to its insatiable maws over sixty miles of plantation railway.

The Usine is in operation from December to June, during which time its machinery never ceases. It is closed for the other half of the year.

The tall, impenetrably planted mature canes are cut in the fields by laborers with machetes, then thrown back to women who strip off the leaves and pile the six to ten foot stalks on waiting donkey carts. The cartloads are weighed and their contents piled onto freight cars which are then hauled directly into the factory shed. There one side of the car is let down and endless chains rake out the cane and start it on its way up an incline to the macerator—or "chewer." Flaying knives attack the hard cane and it is then passed under an immensely powerful zigzag cut roller which chops it still finer; finally three other finely grooved rollers shred the cane until it is entirely dry. The resulting chaff, called *bagasse*, is conveyed to the furnaces that provide all power for the plant. No other fuel is necessary—there is indeed a surplus of *bagasse*.

The juice squeezed out by this grinding process drains down and is carried to boilers where surplus water is evaporated off. Then it passes into tall, controlled-temperature vacuum pans where the process of crystallization goes on until the cane juice has been reduced to a thick, granular brown paste. This paste is freed of surplus molasses by treatment in rapidly whirling centrifuges and the product is repeatedly returned to the pans for further crystallization. The ultimate result of the process is a coarse, yellowish grain—the sugar of the sugar countries. Factories nearer the final market carry out the process of refining it into white sugar. The black

molasses that has been expelled—among other uses—is fermented and distilled into the commoner kinds of rum, and molasses-saturated muck that is left as a residue is pressed into cakes and supplied to the cane farmers as a fertilizer. . . . Automatic sacking machines bag the sugar into two hundred pound jute sacks, the unit of the world's market.

. . . The sturdy sightseers who make the expedition to Pitch Lake and the southern part of the island return at the long day's end satisfied but worn. Other drives have less remarkable objectives and are far less fatiguing. . . .

Inveterate bathers can do no better than make straight from Port of Spain to Macqueripe Bay at the northwestern point of the island, near the Bocas, with a not-very-long detour to a pool called the Blue Basin. The road to Macqueripe passes through newly-built, attractive suburbs of the capital, then follows the edge of the Gulf of Paria past the Pan-American airport and at last enters a half-wild district of woods and citrus farms. A high range of mountains follows the northern coastline of the island. There are repeated glimpses of their forest covered shoulders and summits in the distance.

Macqueripe Bay is a deep and fairly narrow indentation between sheer and rugged cliffs. The pound of the perpetual surf has gutted them into unapproachable dark caves. The inner edge of the bay is a beach of clean sand backed by a jungle-filled ravine. There are bath houses and a refreshment shed and a great shade tree growing from the sand not far away where, if necessary, one can escape the sun.

The branch road to the Blue Basin passes through River Estate, a beautifully kept government farm largely devoted to the cultivation of cocoa trees under measured, experimental

conditions. A short distance beyond it is a signpost to the Blue Basin, which must be reached by a five minutes walk by foot path through the woods. The Basin is simply a charming pool of a peculiar turquoise blue. A stream pours down from the cliff above in a circular, graceful sweep and pours into a bowl of faultless clarity about twenty feet below. Mossy, vine-grown limestone cliffs rise round it. It is the perfect picnic spot.

A longer trip, that is almost never taken, except on private business, is to drive by the Southern Main Road to a town called Couva, then turn inland into the Montserrat district. Montserrat is a rolling farming country characterized by many streams and little hills and most of the area is devoted to cocoa. If the season is early winter the scene is one of incredible beauty. Cocoa trees are planted in Trinidad, as in Puerto Rico, under tall grey shade trees called Bocare, or Immortels, and from January to March their branches drip a riotous profusion of flame-red flowers. The vegetation of the district is exuberant, various and tropical in the extreme. In the Bocare season the roads are carpeted with scarlet flowers. Montserrat is merely a farm country, but on fine days and toward twilight it is exquisitely, unforgettably lovely.

Nor do most people, through they very well might, take the long drive through the high forests of Trinidad to the little village called Toco at the island's north-eastern tip. The distance is as great as to Pitch Lake but every mile of it is more attractive. Crossing the island, the road lies below the foothills of the Northern Range, then it skirts the eastern, windward coast to the extreme point of the island. The windward shores of Trinidad are relatively deserted. Palm-fringed,

white sand beaches extend for unbroken miles where one may walk often without encountering another human being. Outlying reefs break the ocean's force and since the trades perpetually blow it is nearly always cool. . . .

One feature of Trinidadian life is wholly unique. There is a type of folk music in Trinidad called *calypso* that is as unspoiled, as vital and original as any surviving on this too-uniform earth.

Calypso singing and playing receive their great impetus from the great annual event of the island, the Mardi Gras Carnival. The majority of Trinidadians are Roman Catholic and few of them are far in memories from a more primitive time. The two combine in two pre-Lenten days of splendor.

The Negroes of the island look forward to Carnival for months. For weeks every store on the island displays masks and the makings of costumes. Everyone, no matter how poor, manages somehow to invest. Blackface regalia is conspicuous by its absence. Clown-white is the special favorite.

Half the population is costumed by daybreak of Mardi Gras Monday, most of them with notable originality. One school of costume that is a conspicuous favorite bases its inspiration, by a curious inheritance, in the regalia of the long-dead Caribs who once populated the island. They are elaborate affiairs of turkey-red, canary-yellow and orange robes, sashes and flowing sleeves, the whole topped by enormous paper headdresses in the form of towers, turreted castles and great ships. Others dress in white toweling, wear pink paper ears and unconvincingly announce themselves as rabbits. Still others are gorgeous black bats with yellow wings. Variety is

endless; the congested, immovable streets of Port of Spain at the height of the festivities a remarkable spectacle.

Typically, groups of celebrants form themselves into bands and walk the streets begging and singing. Their musical instruments—and, since they are Negroes, they produce real music from them—are often nothing more than washboards scraped with an iron rod, two hard sticks rapped together, gourds filled with seeds and big graters scraped with a heavy nail. Their singing, sometimes prepared a little in advance, often extemporized on the spot, deals with anything and anyone that happens to occur to them. Many calypso songs are therefore necessarily poor. Others are ribald, effective, and extraordinarily brilliant. Prizes are awarded at each Carnival for the best.

So stimulating a custom is not to be set aside when the holiday is over. Particularly gifted singers and composers have emerged, surrounded themselves with efficient bands, and become professionals. Now, through the whole year, every event that interests the common people of the island finds its way quickly into the calypso form.

On a recent visit to Trinidad I spent an evening at a large moving picture theater in Port of Spain where a half-dozen of the more famous calypso singers were appearing. There were no other whites in an audience of nearly a thousand. The conduct of the affair was totally un-selfconscious.

A band of about ten players—sophisticated to the point of good clothes, banjos, clarinets and saxophones—seated themselves in kitchen chairs on the stage, then, one by one the stars came on and sang their latest calypso compositions into a microphone. Their *noms-de-pièce* had a Carnival character. On

that evening I heard Attila, The Lion, Houdini, Radio King, and Young Pretender.

The subjects they sang of were the recent resignation of a Governor-General, a strike riot in the southern oil fields, a speech made at the last assemblage of the Legislative Council, the state of the cocoa market—none, one might think, rich in lyric or comic possibilties, yet all poignantly close to the interests and emotions of the audience. I was a complete outsider, in race, in experience. I knew little or nothing of the subjects discussed in the calypso singing. Yet, so magnificent was their rhythm, so vivid and original their style, and so sharp and infectious their wit, outsider though I was, I found myself completely enthralled. I was made to yell with laughter, my feet twitched responsively to the irresistible time, my palms became worn from applause.

Here was folk-music—spontaneous and unwritten—as it was meant to be. Here, as was the intention of song, the matter was life itself, its hourly, immediate events. The singers, queer, ill-assorted, oddly dressed colored men outwardly like any passers-by of the Port of Spain streets, seemed to me to be men of genius.

The conclusion of the performance was most remarkable of all. The stars, who previously had taken turns at the microphone, at last crowded round it in a body—and for twenty minutes engaged in a rapid-fire, completely extemporaneous, humorous cross-talk in *rhymed song*. It was an unbelievable achievement. I know no group of entertainers in America or England who could rely with such entire success upon their own unaided wits.

. . . If being in a modern, comfortable theater full of clean,

courteous, honest and extremely orderly colored people is not a deterrent and there is a calypso performance scheduled in Port of Spain, anyone with sufficient enterprise to go to it I promise will be eternally repaid.

Happily, a few of the best calypso singers have grown so famous that they have made the trip up to New York to make phonograph recordings of their best songs. There are several shops in Port of Spain where their records are on sale. . . . Some of the words, due to the curious accents of Trinidad, are somewhat difficult for a stranger to understand. But after a playing or two nearly all become comprehensible —and fine calypso rhythms are universally appealing.

Trinidad is civilized, modern. Autos, telephones and electricity are as familiar to most of its inhabitants as they are to the citizens of Kansas, yet scratch a Trinidadian and you

find a calypso singer; scratch him deeper and you will find the memories of Africa still green.

Trinidad is thronged with a kind of reckless evil spirit called jumbies, or Mal Jo—after *mal de ojo*, which in Spanish means evil eye. Country folk plant an inedible horse bean along their fence lines to keep the jumbies out. Fruit trees can be protected from them by having a rusty nail driven in the trunk. . . .

There are many, many things which the wise must know. A bit of a rope with which someone has been hanged is a strong luck bringer. When a corpse leaves a house the water in which it has been bathed must be thrown out after it, or its ghost will return. And, of course, bodies must be carried out feet first. . . . The humor out of the eye of a white horse put in one's own will enable one to see ghosts—as if one would wish to! . . . Remember, never call a name loudly in a lonely place, for wanton ghosts might hear and repeat it continually until the bearer of the name would die. . . . If you must call out in the woods, call your friend by a nickname.

It is good practice to leave bits of food that have been dropped on the floor untouched for the jumbies. For them, too, the last liquid left in a glass should be thrown on the ground.

But Soucouyans are most to be dreaded. A Soucouyan takes off his skin between midnight and the dawn and hiding it under a mortar, flies off as a ball of fire, and enters rooms through keyholes or under doors to suck fresh blood from the heart of a sleeping victim. A simple precaution renders one safe. If grains of rice are sprinkled on the floor around

the bed the Soucouyan must stop and pick up every one, and by that time it will be dawn and it must go back and get its skin. . . . If ever you find a skin under a mortar sprinkle it with salt for then when the Soucouyan puts it back on it will smart and he will jump and yell and reveal himself for what he is. . . . Certain very old women with red eyes are Soucouyans. . . .

. . . . . .

The island of Tobago, twenty miles northeast of Trinidad, and overnight by a small steamer round from Port of Spain, is more vaguely familiar to most people than any other island of the West Indies, though it is still among the least visited. For Tobago is the locale of "*The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner*" by that amazing brick-maker, hosier, bankrupt, pamphleteer and genius, Daniel Defoe. How, in the course of his frenziedly active life Defoe ever chanced upon a detailed description of Tobago is as puzzling as many other things about him. Certainly he never visited the West Indies. But Tobago is unmistakably the island of the story. Trinidad is the island in the distance from which the cannibal Caribs came in their canoes; the very beach where Man Friday's footprint first appeared may be selected by each sightseer for himself. . . . Indeed, in 1885 the skull of the very goat that Crusoe mistook for the Devil was sent officially from Tobago to be exhibited at the Indian and Colonial Exposition in England.

It is somewhat confusing, for Defoe's narrative apparently was based upon the actual adventures of the Scottish buccaneer of the early eighteenth century, Alexander Selkirk, who

was marooned for four years on the quite different island of Juan Fernandez, off the coast of Chile. Defoe, quite properly, simply shifted things round to serve the purposes of fiction.

Until lately, Tobago, though swollen with history, had little fame other than the Crusoe association—and Tobagan history, being the very most involved of any of the Caribbean islands, was more unknown even than the island. Dutch, French, English and a series of private adventurers had ping-ponged it to and fro for centuries, leaving the ball, as was so often the case, when the game was called on account of the arrival of the nineteenth Century, in the possession of Britain. Tobago proved somewhat like an International Cup. Having been at great pains to win it, the victor then didn't know quite what to do with it.

Tobago is beautiful and mountainous and it has fine deep crater harbors. But then there are many others possessed of those advantages. Tobago by some fate is really the last of the West Indies. It has the charms of many of the others, and it can grow most of the crops. . . . It has caves and forests and perfect beaches and a warm pure charm of its own. . . .

Trinidadians go there on vacation in increasing numbers, to a more restful place, and a few outsiders and full-season visitors from abroad are beginning to follow them. . . .

And—in the village of Plymouth on Tobago is a tombstone on which is inscribed the record, beyond all competition, of the Two Neatest Tricks of the Week: It is noted of a deceased lady:

> *"She was a mother without knowing it, and a wife without letting her husband know it."*

XV—*THE MAIN AND CURAÇAO*

JUST south of Trinidad and in sight of it is "one of those little South American countries," as they are vaguely called. It is Venezuela—(dubbed "Little Venice" because an imaginative explorer noted some Indian huts built on poles in the middle of a swamp)—and it has seventeen hundred miles of coastline and an area equal to that of Great Britain, Germany, and Japan combined. . . . Obviously such a country does not lend itself to quick summary.

Due, however, to such formidable circumstances as huge swamps, the Andes, unexplored rivers, and, not least, the jaundiced eye with which Venezuelans look upon most strangers, few travellers penetrate more deeply than the capital.

The rest of Venezuela remains, and likely will for generations, for the Latin American specialist, the explorer, and for the still more intrepid businessman who is willing to extend credit. It is not to be regretted. We swarm, as it is, too freely on the earth. It is as well that parts of it be undisturbed, at least left to the future.

The little wedge of penetration that Venezuela exposes for inspection runs from the port of La Guayra to the capital city of Caracas in a valley beyond the mountains. It is a tantalizing sample.

The first sight of La Guayra is disappointing. The background of huge red mountains that stand up sheerly from the coast, walling the continental hinterland with a thoroughness that is almost a threat, most certainly is not. But the town itself gives an impression of unredeemed ugliness.

Steamers anchor some distance offshore in an unprotected "road" and passengers and cargo are taken ashore in launches. Often there is so heavy a swell that the leap from companionway to tender becomes not unlike catching an express elevator that never stops. The inner port, however, has a stone breakwater and landing stair, so even the unagile, with the assistance of the extended paws of sailors, can be hoisted safely onto the solid ground of South America.

The continental gateway, with entire lack of splendor, consists of a coal yard, some railroad tracks and a few brownish customs' officers. On boat days the street beyond is a vociferous madhouse of cars, guides, chauffeurs, tour managers, postcard and souvenir vendors and embattled tourists. The majority of the last eventually succeed in extricating themselves from the confusion, get into waiting cars and

go inland immediately to Caracas. It is the reasonable and proper procedure.

On the map it is only six crow's-flight miles from La Guayra to the capital. By the road it is twenty-three miles and it is amazing that the trip can be accomplished in even so short a distance.

The Caracas highway is a remarkable feat of engineering. . . . Though it is of recent construction one's mind goes back with freshened admiration to that extraordinary breed of Spanish men who forced their hold on such a land. It is difficult to conceive of any party of explorers who could come upon such a forbidden coast and plan more than to fix a temporary camp by the beach. Yet the Conquerors, faced by the immense bare rampart of the Venezuelan Cordilleras, went at them as if they were molehills; found and settled the vast rich land behind them.

Between La Guayra and Caracas the road winds up to an elevation of four thousand feet. The views—if one can keep one's mind off thoughts of death, which is not so common on the Caracas road as one would naturally think, since all surviving Venezuelan drivers have traversed it an infinite number of times—are magnificent. Except for a few grisly Latin-American equivalents of soda-pop stands and the huts of a few goat-keeping peasants by the way, the adjacent region is almost uninhabited, indeed, uninhabitable. A coarse scrub clings to the dry slopes, a giant power line marches superbly over far off crests and a few white clouds float above the distant sea. The road is white, the earth through which it cuts is black or rusty red, the rainless sky is a still, metallic blue.

From the highest point the road goes down into a fertile valley, out of solitude and desolation into an amazing modern city. No matter how much formal information one may have had about Caracas before sighting it, it is impossible to come upon it without astonishment. That it is the capital and major city of a Republic of immense territory and great wealth and that the population of Caracas at a recent census was 140,000 are facts that somehow reveal nothing. There is no warning that beyond those forbidding, empty hills lies a metropolis as modern, as ornate and brightly painted as if it had just been constructed by the scenic department of a Hollywood studio.

The suggestion of southern California is inescapable. Caracas is in a wide river valley of comparative fertility. But the bare, treeless, dusty hills enclose all distant views. The streets of Caracas are shaded with eucalyptus and palms that have the slightly strained look of surviving under difficulties. The notably numerous villas of rich Venezuelans follow the Spanish architectural tradition favored, less reasonably, by Pasadena. Majolica tiles, stone park benches, fountains and bronze statuary groups are distributed with a lavish hand. Nothing is old but there is little that is in bad taste. Caracas, self-evidently, is a wealthy city. . . . One needs but to dine or price some such simple thing as the flowers that are displayed in a lovely stall by the public market to discover that real wealth is needed to live there.

Venezuela has a rich cattle country in the highlands, sugar grows along the coast and gold and diamonds have been found in the eastern hills. But nothing compares as a source of revenue to oil. Venezuela is one of the major petroleum producing countries of the world. With little trouble to her

citizenry, foreign companies have prospected, drilled wells and established an immense industry, paying a royalty for the privilege to the Venezuelan government. As a result of this ever-increasing income the Republic has the rare distinction of having no external debt, a trifling internal one, a balanced budget, a treasury surplus, and an unchanged gold standard. Few of the world's currencies are so highly priced. An ordinary light luncheon in Caracas, therefore, costs about $2.50, housekeeping and the necessities and amenities of life probably are more expensive than anywhere else in the world. Travellers soon learn to keep their pockets firmly buttoned. Bargains simply do not exist.

There are however a number of places to be seen, and the car in which one has been fetched over the mountains from La Guayra is trained—without further cost—to stand by all day.

No one can remain five minutes in Venezuela without seeing or hearing the name of Simon Bolivar. The standard of currency is the bolivars, the main square of Caracas is the Plaza de Bolivar, an equestrian statue of Bolivar stands in it. His house is not far from the marketplace.

Other than that we know vaguely that Bolivar liberated a large part of South America from the authority of Spain, most Europeans and North Americans are abysmally ignorant of his career.

Simon Bolivar was born in Caracas in 1783. His family was rich and noble. Simon was educated in Madrid. After a visit to the United States, where he was deeply and favorably impressed by the natal processes of a free democracy, he returned to Venezuela to throw himself into the local struggle for

independence which had then just begun to take formidable shape. Bolivar was delicate, scholarly, finely idealistic. His innumerable portraits show a man of remarkable physical beauty. Violence and the exercise of authority were repugnant to him. Yet through inescapable circumstance he became the great military leader of his country, with years and victories found himself forced to impose upon the new disorder that had followed the defeat of Spain a personal rule as absolute as that of the Castilian Viceroys.

Bolivar's later life was troubled by the hatred of those who owed him most. But in the end, though in final bitterness he once summed his career in the phrase "I have been ploughing the sea!", the Spanish claim to a quarter of the continent had been finally destroyed. In grateful belated memory the four present-day republics of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia today all render his name homage as their founder.

Simon Bolivar's house in Caracas, a century later, still has an air of elegance and permanence that, in one's prevailing ignorance, one does not commonly associate with Latin America. It is a low, wandering building of white stucco, roofed with red earth tiles. The few rooms that have been preserved as they were in Bolivar's time are furnished with handsome, simple furniture. An inner patio with a well in it and a minimum of formal planting has a curious, dignified beauty quite its own. The state rooms, panelled and floored with shining native hardwoods, are hung with a profusion of state portraits and a not unimpressive series of large historical canvasses by a Venezuelan artist named Tito Salas. Some are allegorical, a number show scenes of battles famous in local history, nearly all are of vast dimensions. They represent a now past fashion

of painting, a queer no-man's-land somewhere between Delacroix and Meissonier. Yet even the most critical find themselves lingering over them, held by an unexpected interest. Salas, like his city and his country, had strength and style.

As is to be anticipated in a country of Latin tradition, the public buildings of Caracas are impressive in the extreme. . . . There is a National Pantheon of heroes. It is a somewhat crypt-like edifice smelling faintly of damp mortar and haunted by the dim presence of flamboyant marble statues. The National Capitol, built round a beautifully planted garden, has a series of state chambers of a wonderful ornateness. Damasks, satins, gildings, woods, marbles and materials of every sort are of the most costly varieties obtainable. Nothing has been spared except, possibly, taste. A visitor grows more and more mute with amazement that so much splendor has found its way to this high valley in a distant land.

The shopping streets of Caracas are consistently, prosperously busy. The extraordinary number of cars that honk and struggle with such difficulty through them are of the most expensive types and makes of America and Europe. What they must have cost, delivered and duty-paid in so costly a country makes the imagination reel. Even the poor quarters of Caracas seem to have been painted in their varied bright colors just a few days before. There is no litter except that cheerful sort that is the refuse of recent building operations.

In the fringes of the city, where are the fine houses of the rich Venezuelans, there are several clubs and restaurants. All are characterized by the ornate tiles and marbles that are so favored by Caracan taste. . . . One restaurant and dance hall must be the largest, or the widest, of the most superlative

something, on the South American continent. Guests are served excellent meals in a room so vast that the faces of friends in an opposite corner are as dim as an opera tenor's to an admirer in the fourth-tier gallery. Waiters walk themselves into exhaustion. A hundred couples, dancing on the tiled floor to the music of a full orchestra on a formal stage above them, shuffle with the lonely embarrassment that afflicts one pair alone in a deserted night club.

Few tourists—not one in ten thousand—spend more than a single day in Caracas. The troubled affairs of the Republic —Venezuela had fifty-eight revolutions between the days of Bolivar and the rise to power of the dictator Gomez in 1910— long made it a country to be avoided by the merely curious. Even today Venezuela does not encourage intruders. A voyager "on his own" is tripped by red tape from the moment of landing to the hour of his departure. The Republic has affairs of its own. More, it is sufficiently prosperous so as not to need those widely popular dollars and pounds that Anglo-Saxons delight to dribble after them in their incessant wanderings.

The same car that has brought one up to Caracas turns back in the late afternoon. Soon the ridge of the Cordilleras is reached and the winding, perilous way down begins. Abruptly, like the falling of a curtain, the size and shine and swiftness of Caracas become incredible, only half-remembered.

Down in La Guayra again, if there is time enough before sailing, an hour of ambling private exploration may serve a double purpose. Despite its superficial ugliness, there is a quarter in La Guayra east of the landing place and up among

some steep hill streets that is uniquely charming. Such an unlisted discovery is in itself worth while. But Caracas, vehement, new and incomprehensible, is apt to leave a stranger subtly shattered, with mood and mind in faint confusion. One has seen so much, understood so little, discovered such depths in one's own ignorance. It is pleasant therefore to return to the merely picturesque.

To the east, then up the hill—there are no more elaborate directions. Nor is there a cathedral, a monument or a museum for destination. Streets as steep as stairways climb the shoulder of the giant Cordillera at whose base La Guayra stands. At either side are tiny houses with walls kalsomined Nile green, rose, tomato red, the purple of ripe plums, seal brown, canary and mustard yellow. Window boxes drip flowers, sad eyes and gentle brown Indian faces smile shyly out of the dim darkness behind them. Barefoot children with lank black hair and moist red mouths play in the lengthening shadows. The bronze bell in a little church that has stood on the hill for centuries tolls the hour of vespers. An old beggar with a clumsy crutch held close to his breast sleeps by a white wall, sharing what warmth the afternoon sun has left in it. Tiny figures plod up the bare slopes high above the last of the huts to bring their goats down from the pastures. . . .

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Caracas is best seen by car. Curaçao, the inevitable next port, is just as emphatically pedestrian. . . .

The Kingdom of the Netherlands, as her ultimate share of the New World spoils, drew what were to all outward appearances the booby prizes. Saba of "The Ladder" and the

eagle's nest towns, and barren little St. Eustatius, in the hands of less enterprising owners would almost certainly have remained no more than transfer points for seagulls. The British or French Colonial offices, after noting them on the large-scale maps, would probably have forgotten their existence. The Dutch, however, having redeemed seabottom for their homeland, are skilled in the use of unlikely geography. Even Curaçao did not defeat them.

Curaçao, the largest of three A.B.C. islands—the others are Aruba and Bonaire—lies in the southern Caribbean just off the coast of the western end of Venezuela. In all, the trio comprise the not inconsiderable total of 374 square miles of area, but there are probably few regions this side of the Gobi desert superficially worth less per acre. Curaçao is hilly, rocky and almost devoid of vegetation. There are no springs on it and so little water falls on it either as mist or rain that the thirty thousand people who now live on the island are largely dependent on water—at from two to ten cents a gallon—brought to them by ships or distilled from the sea in a government plant. . . . One result of this nearly-perpetual drought is that the roads and streets of the port town of Willemstad tend to be dusty. But the Dutch are as firm with dirt as with desolation. Despite the preciousness of the fluid, the Willemstad streets are regularly watered.

In the beginning, of course, Curaçao was part of the universal Spanish claim. But with two continents and the whole of the West Indies to choose from, the literally desert island of Curaçao was forgotten. The Dutch formed a settlement on it in 1634 with no difficulty. If they resented it at all the Spaniards must have felt a sardonic amusement. Her erstwhile rebel

province, now grown to bellicose statehood, in seizing Curaçao had apparently seized no better than a nettle. Nothing would grow on it, except a few trees of bitter oranges and grass enough for goats. Bare existence was difficult enough; prosperity impossible.

But nine years after the establishment of the first colony the Dutch home government sent out a doughty Governor-General. His name—(he was later promoted to a better post on an island named Manhattan)—was Peter Stuyvesant. Stuyvesant's new charge, he realized promptly, could have a future only as a market.

It was the mid-seventeenth century and the slave trade was at its height, yet there was still no central market, no convenient place to store, exchange and auction the human cargoes. Curaçao straightway became that place. Prosperity came and abided. Houses and warehouses sprang up. Ships of all nations crowded the Willesmstad port. Curaçao was conveniently situated between Panama, the Islands, and the Main. The slave runners found it useful not only for trading in blacks but for trading goods of every other sort, for refitting and for the hiring of crews.

The golden stream ran on for almost two centuries. Dutch enterprise had made of worthless Curaçao one of the most valuable properties in the Caribbean. Then emancipation abruptly dammed it. Curaçao entered upon a long depression.

But what enterprise had done luck did again. With the discovery of oil in Venezuela, most of it in the region of the Lake of Maracaibo, that part of the Republic closest to the Dutch islands, the foreign petroleum companies made the additional discovery that Venezuela was a harassing place to do

business. Latin-American officials, broadly speaking, were as greedy as they were incompetent. It was difficult, despite all manner of contracts, to know what disastrous or hampering change of law was coming next. The Dutch were dependable. Curaçao was handily near.

The island is now one of the greatest oil refining centers of the world and is more prosperous than it has ever been. Every morning a fleet of tankers comes over from Maracaibo, a floating bridge of boats called the Emmaburg is drawn away from the channel into the inner harbor and the raw oil is discharged at plants beyond the town. Nearly a quarter of a million tons of oil are refined in Curaçao each month.

The larger steamers that bring travellers to Curaçao usually stop at a deeper port some miles from Willemstad and passengers drive in by car. Arrived, the great majority, both male and female, breathe deep, set their shoulders, and plunge with a footballer's ruthless vigor into the real purpose of their voyage. Curaçao is a low duty port, therefore for many articles the best shopping place in the Caribbean. The word has spread and both merchants and travellers are ready. They meet with an impact that is audible at quarter of a mile.

The best Willemstad shops—French perfumes and all manner of imported liquors are their chief stock—are on two streets that touch at a right angle. Up to the moment when the first of the tour cars reaches town the neighborhood is quiet, almost sedate. An instant later it surges with the noise and turbulence of a May Day riot. The numerous extra shop assistants prove unequal to the burden. Impatient shoppers take to waiting on themselves and fighting each other for choice items. Crazed by the low prices, women whose stubby

fingers drip with jewelry bellow for still lower ones, calling down imprecations in two languages on the shopmen who stand out against them. For the participants it is all great fun.* The more timorous wait until the worst of the clamor has died down. Delay, incidentally, provides an opportunity to see the city one has come to.

Willemstad is like no other town in the world. In typical Dutch style the narrow Shottegat harbor and a canalized offshoot divide it, so a number of its main streets face on white limestone quays. Though there is a tempering wind there are few daytime hours during the year when Willemstad does not flicker under the glaring sun of the low tropics. Yet its houses are designed no more tropically than those of Amsterdam. Rather charmingly, the prevailing architectural fashion is still not very far from that of the Lowlands in the eighteenth century. There are the same steep gables, the same narrow house-fronts and prim glazed windows that look so virtuously down upon the quiet canals at home. But in Willemstad, where the weary eyes need rest rather than stimulation, instead of the soft greys and brick-tones of Holland, the vision is beset by walls fresh-painted in violent reds, bright yellows, blues, and mustards. There are few trees, due to the perpetual drought, but man has more than replaced the colors of nature. Willemstad is as bright as the creation of a German toymaker.

Its people, preponderantly Negro with an admixture of Indians and Spaniards from the Main, are clean and visibly more energetic than their neighbors on others islands. Since

* A common and not unnatural mistake is for visitors to Curaçao to invest heavily in bottled Curaçao. The liqueur however is not made on the island. The peel of a local bitter orange that is shipped to Europe—in rather small quantities—was merely the original source of the Curaçao flavor.

slavery ended the common folk of Curaçao have to some extent shared the island's prosperity. Work has been plentiful and wages relatively high. They speak, to the bafflement of strangers, a language that is peculiarly their own. It is called Papiamento and is unique upon the A.B.C. islands. Dutch, French, English, Spanish and fragments of African and Indian tongues have all made their contribution to the Papiamento jargon, but unlike most dialect tongues that have "just growed." Papiamento has its own structure and grammar and is written. . . . Being Dutch subjects however, the majority of Curaçaons have some of their masters' genius for languages and can turn on at will almost any common speech required of them.

Strollers in so compact and neat a place cannot stray far. A walk over the Emmaburg boat bridge—in the past a toll was charged of the shod and none of the barefoot!—to Other Side, or Otrabanda, enables one to engage in that profitable, but idiotic-sounding, occupation of looking back to see where you have been. Willemstad's strong colors look best if held off a bit. So Other Side is the place from which to appreciate them. A little exploration will result in the discovery of picturesque stretches of waterfront and odd corners of immaculate slums. . . . On the Willemstad side there is a stroll by the quay of a blue canal where the schooner fleet from Venezuela ties up. Curaçao, being nearly sterile, does not feed itself, so fruits, fish, meat, and vegetables are brought over from the Main. Trading is done on the stone quay and on the decks of the ships themselves. Refuse—in neat Willemstad—goes neatly overboard.

XVI—*PANAMA*

WHEN Vasco Nunez de Balboa in 1513 crossed the Isthmus to the first heart-lifting sight of the Pacific Ocean, he came back with the suggestion of a Panama canal. Precisely four hundred years later the project was completed.

By chance Balboa had hit upon the one place between Point Barrow and Cape Horn where the two great seas of the world were most narrowly divided. Balboa had succeeded where Columbus had failed. This, in truth, was what they sought, the long-imagined way to the East. But the Isthmian road was hard and with the passing of the Pharaohs the strength and skill for the effecting of great earth changes had gone for the time from men. Cheops, if the task had been his and

could he have dreamed of anything but death, might conceivably have constructed the Canal. Ferdinand the Catholic could not. An actual survey conducted during the reign of Charles V served only to show that the scheme was beyond human capacity.

Soon, in any case, the East was all but forgotten, its promise of wealth put by in the reality of the treasures of Peru. The Gold Road over the fifty miles of swamp and jungled mountains of the Isthmus grew relatively passable and the grandiose scheme of a canal was set aside. Strong Spanish towns grew up on the shores of both oceans. The Atlantic galleons unloaded men and cargoes at Porto Bello and mules carried them through the sweat of the forests to Panama on the Pacific. Some Spanish ships for the sack of the western continent came round the Horn, others were built and launched in Panama.

The trade winds that blow among the Caribbees fail before they reach as far as Panama, so both sides of the Isthmus swelter most of the year in a humid heat. During the centuries when it served as a land highway to the west and south Panama was a place of constant hazard. Conquerors bound outward to Peru with hope, or home with spoils, crossed themselves at the prospect of the Isthmian crossing and prayed that a plague of fever might not be raging when they landed, that the long journey over the Gold Road would not leave them cavern-cheeked and trembling for the rest of their shortened days. . . .

The California gold rush in 1849 first focussed American attention upon Panama. Until then, except for the handful whose particular business took them there, the Isthmus was as

remote to most Americans as a moon crater. But in '49 those on their way west were in a frantic hurry. Covered wagons across the plains were slow and the movies had not been invented to show that they were picturesque. Even the long trip by sailing ship down to Panama, across, and by another ship up to California was faster and all who could afford it went by that route. The Canal plan again came up for discussion. Meanwhile American capitalists built a railway over the route and made their fortunes by it.

Not long afterward the French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps successfully severed Africa and Asia at Suez. That age-old project carried to a successful conclusion, de Lesseps in 1881 effected the formation of a gigantic stockholding company to undertake the even greater task at Panama. The new corporation hung about its neck the grandiloquent but unhandy title of the *Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocéanique de Panama* and set to work.

De Lesseps' proposal was to dig a sea-level canal, one single, simple ditch through mountains, swamps and rivers straight from sea to sea. Had he succeeded—and had not plague, dishonesty and incompetence tripped him he well might have—the result, without the most intricate and perfect precautions, might easily, it seems to an amateur, have been the demolition of both continents and the general confusion of the earth. The mean level of the Pacific ocean (and I'm sure I don't know why) is eight inches higher at Panama than the mean level of the Atlantic at Colon. The tides of the Atlantic ocean at the Isthmus vary only a foot, those of the Pacific rise and fall twelve feet. . . . What manner of four-times-a-day cataract would have roared through de Lesseps' sea level ditch the

moment the last cubic yards of earth were blasted free one shudders to contemplate. The effort of the two oceans to seek a common level might have made a show worth all it cost. But navigation would have been safer down Niagara Falls. . . .

The *Compagnie Universelle et cetera, et cetera* in 1889, after ten years of extraordinary labors and the expenditure of $300,000,000, went bankrupt. A major factor in the failure had been the deadly climate of the Isthmus—a deadliness most terribly aggravated by the crowding and confusion that resulted from the huddling together of thousands of laborers for the canal project. Yellow fever and bubonic plague took terrific toll. Malaria was the mildest of complaints. With amazing obtuseness the French sub-contractors had merely laid off their men when they took sick—laid them off to die and to infect the rest. Coolies had been brought from China to be added to a death-roll comparable in totals to a war.

The interest of the United States in a canal became acute during the Spanish-American war. The Navy had a severe reminder of the impossible number of sea miles round by the Horn from the east coast to the west. Surveys were made for a canal to be cut, utilizing a series of lakes and rivers, across the Central American Republic of Nicaragua. During the administration of President McKinley the Nicaraguan project was officially approved.

The threat brought the defunct, but still bargaining, French canal company promptly to terms. The United States Government then purchased from it, for $40,000,000, all rights in perpetuity in Panama, all physical properties, including a mountain of rusted, weed-hidden tools and machines left on the ground, and the Trans-Isthmian Railway. The next step

was the historic, and somewhat sudden, creation of the Panamanian Republic.

The Isthmus was then a part of Colombia. An agreement had been worked out between the United States and Colombian governments whereby the former was to pay the latter $10,000,000 and an annual rental of $100,000 for the use of a Canal Zone. The United States ratified the agreement—and the Colombian Government, hopeful of better terms, at the last minute backed down.

On November 4, 1903, the Colombian Province of Panama declared its independence. Nine days later, with uncommon, not to say suspicious, alacrity, the United States recognized the newborn Republic, and just five days later the Canal treaty was ratified. For the consideration of $10,000,000 and an annual rental of $250,000 (the infant Panamanian Republic had made us raise the ante) a strip of land that was to extend five miles either side of the mid-line of the yet-to-be-dug canal came permanently under United States jurisdiction. The cities of Colon and Panama at the Atlantic and Pacific ends of the zone were to remain part of Panama, but they were to be perpetual free ports and the United States would retain authority in the all important matter of sanitation and was to have certain police powers.

The somewhat blatant "imperialistic" Canal Zone grab had certain not unimportant mitigating circumstances. The Republic of Panama was not pure invention. A nationalist and separatist feeling existed and there had been two previous attempts at rebellion. Too, bereaved Colombia promptly lost face, as soon as the deal with Panama was put through, by clamorously offering to re-annex the territory and sign up at

lower terms. The basic justification, however, lay in that higher, unmoral realm of inevitable public necessity—and in results. The existence of the Canal has proven in all ways profitable to the Panamanians. It would be hard to find anyone so abstrusely and blindly Left who would not admit that every citizen of the area is today "better off," by any definition that one might choose, than he or she would have been had the evil, confusion and sickness of the past continued.

The engineering accomplishment of the Panama Canal is—to put it mildly—remarkable. But the American triumph was in sanitation. Panama was a plague spot, a far shorter route to death than between oceans. To change that was the first job. That the newly-created Canal Zone authorities made it the first job was the primary reason for the American success, as failure to recognize the necessity had been the primary reason for the French debacle.

The famous American surgeon, Col. William Crawford Gorgas, who had had the task of scrubbing the filth of ages from the moribund city of Havana during the Spanish-American War, was put in charge. For the first two years of the American occupancy the chief activities of the Zone were under his direction. Two great base hospitals were built, one at either end of the canal route, each equipped for twenty-five hundred beds, and between them was a string of sixty receiving stations. The contagiously sick were quarantined and either cured or buried. Pest spots were fumigated, millions of rats exterminated, and a system of mosquito control—which still goes on—was instituted.

The vitally important discovery had lately been made that mosquitoes carried yellow fever, and, not very long before,

that they carried malaria. Hundreds of miles of drainage ditches were dug, the infested Panama swamps were sprayed with oil, recourse was made to every scientific ingenuity, work was pressed with ruthless energy. Success was complete. Panama, for many miles both sides of the Zone, is today the healthiest and most insect-free region in the whole of the tropics.

Once at noon of a roastingly hot, still day, I stood for a quarter of an hour in amazement in a native meat market in a back street of the city of Colon. A native meat market in the tropics is ordinarily something to flee with all speed and tight-closed eyes. This one was not even screened. The unlovely slabs of meat lay exposed on open tables. I stared at them as one entranced. I was looking for a fly, not perhaps, in cleanly Panama, for the crawling, gagging swarm of hot towns elsewhere. But—it may have been an off day—I saw not one!

All American houses in Zone territory are still rigorously screened, for the sanitary patrol is unremitting in its zeal, but, practically, screens are unnecessary. Mosquitoes, that for such long ages zzzzzzed in their trillions over the Isthmus, making it a hell of discomfort even for those to whom it was not a hell of sickness, have almost vanished. . . . Government, even our own, can on occasion function magnificently well.

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. . . Among the many efficient accomplishments of the Canal Zone Commission is the provision of facilities for showing the canal to visitors. Excellent little government-printed booklets are presented to all new arrivals. With a wealth of

statistical detail the story of the canal's construction is set down in full. Trains of the Panama railway are run across the Isthmus for the special convenience of tourist ships. The Government provides a big tug and a corps of proficient lecturers to conduct sightseers through the spectacular Big Ditch from Gatun Lake to Pedro Miguel Lock. . . . No one need go away uninformed.

The basic principle of the gigantic cut is simple enough. Precise details can be comprehended only on the spot.

The American engineers discarded the inconceivably difficult French scheme of a sea level canal. The turbulent, erratic Chagres River in the center of the Isthmus had been the prime enemy of the French. The American engineers, in changing de Lesseps' plan, made the Chagres their chief servant. Today the waters of the Chagres flow into an immense artificial lake in the middle of the Zone. Gatun Lake is artificially dammed at one side and retained at the other by the hills of the Continental Divide and the greater part of the forty-mile ocean to ocean voyage is made across its waters. At the Atlantic end ships are lifted to the level of the Lake in the triple-tiered Gatun Locks. After crossing Gatun Lake and passing through the magnificent nine-mile Culebra Cut—the most visibly impressive part of the canal—vessels are lowered to the Pacific through a single lock at Pedro Miguel and two more locks farther on at Miraflores. . . . That, briefly, is all. . . . A 164-square-mile freshwater lake in the middle of the Isthmus fed by the Chagres River, and kept at the constant level of eighty-five feet above the sea by the immense mile-and-a-half-long Gatun Dam; three locks up to it at the Atlantic and three, of equal total height, at the Pacific.

Like all masterpieces, it is brilliantly simple. A sylvan silence has settled now upon the Zone and so smoothly, so quietly are the fleets of the world run through that one is apt to look upon it lightly as an Act of God. The Panama Canal took ten years in the building and cost $460,000,000. It was a most triumphant act of men.

The Canal is of course completely mechanized. The spill of water over the Gatun Dam supplies electrical energy for every function and for the whole of the adjoining country. With half-a-dozen men in the control towers at the locks great liners could be wafted from sea to sea with complete ease if all the rest of Panama were empty. Everything has been modernized to the uttermost. Yet—somehow to my delight—a human touch remains. As a vessel enters Gatun Locks two elderly colored gentlemen in a battered rowboat make their appearance, do something in the middle of the lock with a chain, then quietly row away. I have never quite got it clear, but apparently their service is essential, that without them *none* of it would work. I hope so. It takes the chill off.

. . . Incidentally—though this fact has been repeated *ad nauseam*—the Panama Canal does not decently run east and west as it should. Due to a nervous twist taken by Panama, the Zone runs from northwest to southeast. It is literally, painfully true that the sun sets over the Atlantic; a fact that sets up a confusion in a traveller's consciousness which sometimes does not abate for weeks.

The two cities of entry are wholly dissimilar.

Ships approaching from the Atlantic, after passing a wild shoreline of jungle-covered hills and hidden coves—for much of the Republic of Panama away from the Zone is sparsely

inhabited and little known—sight a long breakwater and behind it a white, nondescript town on a point of level land. It—or they—again this confusion of names!—is—are—in reality two towns, each named after half of Christopher Columbus.

Cristobal (the Spanish spelling of Christopher) is a scrubbed, expressionless community of some five thousand population, most of them either in the service of the Canal administration or in the United States Army. Cristobal lies in the American territory of the Zone itself. Its functions are official, its activities those of the army, the corps of canal engineers, the repair shop, the railway and the port. Its structures are chiefly administration buildings and rows of screened box-square houses, closely resembling old-fashioned meat safes, occupied by the canal employes. Cristobal is a community of the most oppressive virtue.

A few brisk strides down the concrete wharf and over some railroad tracks brings one out of it—into Colon.

Colon is in Panamanian territory. It is a free port and one of the busiest and the most completely international in the world. Since the Republic's major interest is baling what it can from the passing stream of Canal traffic, if ever Colon had a lid, it has long since been taken off.

By day Colon is quiet and commonplace. One notes the regularity of its street plan, the purity of its gutters, the great numbers of its shops and bars. Since Colon is often one of the most breathlessly hot towns on earth, one chiefly notes their drowsiness. But with nightfall all is changed. Colon lights up with the brilliance of Coney Island. Its stores are wider open and more thronged at midnight than at noon. Traffic is dense, the streets are filled, there is a generalized roar of sound, music

bursts from open doorways (closely followed by drunks) All is gala, coarse, obvious—and great fun.

The first street in Colon that one comes to after leaving the big wharfs by the entrance to the Canal is occupied by an almost uninterrupted series of Bombay Stores, similar, but superior, to those in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Colon, as a free port, permits the entrance of many things which pay high duty elsewhere and of this the Indian traders have taken full advantage. At night, glitteringly lighted, filled to overflowing with ships' passengers from all ends of the earth, tended by the alert, thin-featured East Indian clerks and their sharp-eyed superiors, they become fascinating places.

Brasses, carvings and embroideries vie in a confusion of colors. Voices are raised, shoppers shop with a light of lust and joy in their eyes rivalling the arc lights. Stout gentlemen stretch rayon pajamas across their middles and eye themselves proudly in great mirrors; ladies, with temporary un-selfconsciousness, struggle in and out of prospective purchases of the most intimate character. Everyone buys lavishly and with joyous lack of judgment.

Colon is unquestionably the most economical place anywhere for the purchase of French perfumes. The initiate come with lists, the uninitiate go into a visible decline at the discovery that a stock of all sizes and varieties of all known brands of scents numbers actually thousands of items. . . . On perfumes prices are usually fixed, and fixed low. The innumerable silk and rayon objects that travellers bear away with them in such great bundles can generally be dickered for. To obtain the best price—though the method takes great self-control—it is wisest to do all one's shopping in one store,

rather than item by item up and down that enthralling street. Then the pile can be bargained for *in toto*, with remarkable results.

The café district is back into the town within short walking distance. No one with eyes or ears can miss it. There are many bars, most of them with shabby entertainment of some sort, but they come and go. The most permanent and most amusing, and the one most familiar to travellers is the Atlantic Café.

The Atlantic opens on a noisy street. Within there are a few tables and a great semicircular bar. Round that bar, closely attended by hard-working and somewhat haggard professional prostitutes (Colon discourages amateurs) hang the sailors, soldiers and idlers of the earth. All classes, colors, and races mingle in noisy friendliness. The Atlantic is Life with a capital L—but Life on such a frank, well-lighted plane that it is hearty rather than nasty, exciting and completely safe.

Behind the bar, through two narrow doorways at either side, is an immense restaurant, its innumerable tables on a series of slightly raised platforms around a dance floor. It is usually filled with customers, always with smoke. The orchestra is loud, energetic, and competent and the company of entertainers in the floor show, brought from America and Europe, no worse than many of their more highly paid peers on West 52nd Street, New York, or on the slopes of Montmartre in Paris. There is invariably much movement among the tables, of waiters, hostesses of untrammeled morals, and stray guests. The Atlantic is a distinct and memorable experience, one that bears repetition.

Not far away, during the clamorous hours of the warm

night, one may walk down streets of an ancient sort that have all but vanished from the world. No directions are needed. They are recognizable enough when you come to them. The buildings of the quarter are of cheap two-story wooden construction with upstairs balconies that shelter the sidewalks below. At the sidewalk level doors, at close intervals, open on bare little rooms furnished with a bed, a hard chair or two, and a dressing table, with a few cheap chromos on the walls for decoration. There is usually a screen covered with a sleazy silk that may be drawn across the doorway for momentary privacy. Before the doorways sit the women on common kitchen chairs. They are of all races. Many are Negro, some are Indian, and most are of indeterminate shades and races. Few are young, and none, unless one is very blind or drunk or lonely, is beautiful. They wear the tight, flashy dresses of their trade, they are barelegged and often barefoot. Their voices are strident, their salutations ribald. Their rates are low, the time they give is brief. They are miserably poor. . . . Like the Atlantic Café the back streets of the Colon Quarter are one of the spectacles of the Caribbean. Unlike it, if the onlooker has taste, kindness or humanity, the scene is not merry. But one may walk with impunity. Purse and life are as safe after dark in Colon as at a church social in Des Moines. Military and Naval Police supplement the Panamanian force and are on perpetual patrol.

. . . . . .

Balboa and the American-inhabited suburb of Ancon are the Pacific-side equivalents of the hygienic half-town of Cris-

tobal. Beyond Balboa, skirting a wide bay of the western sea, is the city of Panama, capital of the Republic.

Panama, unlike its garish neighbor on the Atlantic, is an old city and one with dignity. Colon had no existence during the long Spanish period because the site was too accessible to sea-raiders and one that it was impossible to fortify. Panama,* with the whole of the Isthmus at its back for protection, endured for centuries as the chief terminal for all the immense activities of settlement and conquest that extended north to California, south to the Horn.

The present city must bear few resemblances to the past. No other rebellion-born Central American republic has ever come into the world with a mouth so full of large and shiny silver spoons as Panama. Before the new nation was a month old it had to its credit in the bank the $10,000,000 fee paid by the United States for the Zone, and every year since then another $250,000 has been regularly deposited. Yet those bounties have from the beginning been the least of the profits Panama has derived from the proximity of the Canal. During the digging days the tens of thousands of employes spent their pay checks in adjoining Panama; since then there have been regiments of United States soldiers, and the crews of a procession of battleships, plus the whole traffic of the world that the Canal has drawn, with appropriate pauses, past Panama's front door.

Panama City therefore has something of the air of comfort and prosperity of that other bounty-fed city, Caracas. Public

* The center of the present city is several miles removed from the site of the first settlement. The older city—its jungle-covered ruins are still magnificently impressive—lies four miles farther west along the coast. Old Panama was destroyed by the English pirate Sir Henry Morgan in 1671.

buildings are solid and good, the parks are neatly kept, the majority of inhabitants are alert and decently dressed. For the excellent reason that the United States Government paid for them, the streets are paved, the sewers are positively elegant, and dirt is as rare as in Curaçao. Panama City, once as filthy as a Crimean War hospital, is today one of the healthiest cities in the tropics.

That part of the Pacific that lies immediately beyond it, called on the maps the Bay of Panama, is nearly windless. In the days of wooden sailing ships vessels were known to slat and drift so long in its doldrum calms that the oak bottoms were eaten out of them by the sea growths and their crews had to take to the boats, leaving the larger vessels sinking beneath untroubled skies. But the city, from some mysterious source, receives an adequate quota of breezes. The reassuring sound of the palm tops rustling is heard often enough for comfort, evening parties may be enjoyed without taking spare collars and a towel to them.

The result is that all American Army and Canal officials who have the privilege of choice live at the Pacific side. Their bungalows cluster on the slopes on Ancon Hill—an unmistakable lump in the immediate background of all Panama City views—and a group of clubs and hotels has grown up as proof of a cosmopolitan, amusing social life. Those visitors who get most from Panama are therefore not swift passers-by, but those who stay, those, above all, who come furnished with introductions to the official set.

The outward view of the city is by no means without interest.

There is an impressive, bulky Cathedral on a Plaza in the

center of town, its twin domes, somewhat eccentrically, faced with mother-of-pearl fetched from the pearl fisheries near the little island of Margarita off the Venezuelan coast. The Panama Cathedral was eighty-eight years in the building and most of the bills were footed by a remarkable personage, a pauper Negro who rose by the force of his own genius to a position of great wealth and the rank of Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Panama.

Another fragment of a church, that of the monastery of Santo Domingo, not far from the sea wall, is well worth looking at by those with a taste for curiosities. Not much remains of it—it was destroyed by fire in 1737—but a few broken brick walls, shored and boarded up with common lumber—and an arch. But that arch is one of the architectural puzzles of the world. It is of brick and mortar, it is extremely long and it is almost perfectly flat. It is impossible—at least for the inexpert—to discover why it stands for a moment. Yet it has remained solid for centuries, through fires, earthquakes and high winds that shook down all around it. . . . There is an accompanying legend that the monk who designed it saw the plan in a dream.

One of the prides of the town is the Maleçon, a sea wall walk round a part of the harbor. . . . There are big shops and Bombay stores in plenty for those who have not shopped themselves out at Colon—or perhaps have come the other way.

One peculiar item uniquely offered for sale in several of the Panama City bazaars are shrunken human heads—most of them, be it said at once, most palpable fakes. "Genuine" shrunken heads come from the Jivaro Indian territory in the interior of Ecuador. These tribesmen have the endearing custom, when

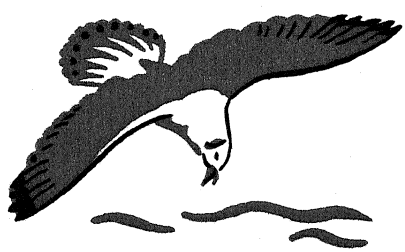
an enemy or friend makes his last exit from Ecuador, of stripping the flesh from the skull, then skilfully shrinking it to fist size by repeated packings with hot ashes. Features are surprisingly well preserved. With a lank knot of hair still adhering to them they are notable spectacles. But few come nowadays from the Jivaro country. Collectors made them too fashionable. The Indians, offered better and better prices for them, reached the point of saying they were sorry, they were all out of heads at the moment, but they could get you one Monday. . . . This, as one can imagine, led to ill-feeling among the neighbors, and the Ecuadorian government was forced to forbid the trade. The Panama phonies may be recognized, even by the inexpert, by the abnormal size of the skin pores, for they are of simple cowskin—and by the price. A genuine Jivaro head is worth at least a hundred dollars.

Another Panama item, not unnaturally, is Panama hats. They are offered in thousands and at all prices. Many are delusions.

Confusingly, Panama hats have never been made in Panama. They have that name simply because Panama has always been the central market for them. The best come—like the heads—from Ecuador, to the south, and the most valuable bear the mark of the district of Monte Cristi. A commoner but still serviceable sort is made in Colombia. *Caveat emptor* is the slogan of hat traders, like most other traders, so the buyer must bargain and beware. Almost none of the straws is sold blocked, but if one knows of a competent place at home where they can be shaped, economical purchases can certainly be made.

Near a rather new and garish part of town, by a curve of

the sea wall, stands an impressive monument. It is of heroic dimensions, in bronze and stone and it is in commemoration of the Conquistador Nunez de Balboa. He stands magnificently in helmet and armor, a sword upraised, the flag of Spain furled round him. The limitless blue sea he found shimmers under the sun or the pale stars a few short yards away. The city, crowding men, the centuries drift away. The Conquerors were cruel and their strong hands grasped more than they had the skill to hold. But no greater breed of men has ever lived. One bows, here at the trail's end, to the undimmed majesty of Spain.



XVII—*THE BAHAMAS*

SOME laborious geographical census taker has numbered the Bahama islands at two thousand. Another, with equal authority, puts them at three thousand. The discrepancy, though vast, is unimportant, for there are really, if possible human use or human occupancy is any standard, only about thirty of them. The rest are coral pinnacles, sandbanks, or narrow bars with a few white seabirds sitting on them scratching their armpits. The whole snarled string of the Bahamas, beginning close to Florida, extends southeast across eight hundred miles of sea almost to Haiti. Their total area is 4375 square miles, their resident population is sixty-five thousand, imports exceed exports nine to one, and the chief industries

are tourists and sponges. Both trades center on the island of New Providence, in the north-center of the group, at the port of Nassau.

Unlike many of the more correctly West Indian islands farther south—geographically the Bahamas form a separate island group—the Bahaman present is rosier than its past. Within a few years after Columbus had made his first landfall at Watling's Island, the Spanish settlers had come from Haiti and removed all the aboriginal Yucayo Indian inhabitants to work in the Haitian mines. The rest, hounded, desolate and terrified, soon died out. That was early in the sixteenth century. The Spaniards, seeing in the Bahamas no hope of sudden wealth, left them empty.

In 1629 Charles Stuart of England, who had as much right to them as to the moon, granted the Bahamas to a courtier. It was a gift of meager worth, but some twenty years later a few settlers did drift down from Bermuda and from then on the infiltration was fairly steady.

The Spanish, with dog-in-the-manger ill temper, repeatedly attacked and destroyed the weak English settlements, but soon their raids diminished, and finally ceased. With excellent reason. The great majority of the first Bahaman citizens followed the trade of piracy. They were dangerous antagonists. The hidden coves, the unnamed islets and the bleak, sunstricken mystery of the far-flung archipelago had irresistibly attracted them. For a hundred years sea raiders dwelt on the Bahamas careening their ships, carousing, dividing their spoils, swooping from the shelter of the reefs to the attack of laden vessels passing by. It was the most colorful—and the most comfortable—time in buccaneer history.

But in 1717, when piracy had become as noxious to England as it was meant to be to Spain, a captain in the Royal British Navy was appointed the Bahamas' Governor. In obedience to the motto of the colony: "*Expulsis Piratis Restituta Commercia!*" the buccaneers were hunted from their hiding places, many were hanged, and more than a thousand, who surrendered, received the King's Pardon. The Bahamas settled down to complacent virtue.

Since the islands are little more than sand and coral, not much grows on them; none of the great tropical crops that has brought alternating wealth and ruin to other of the islands. But there were fish in infinite numbers in the pure blue water, vegetables grew somehow in the cracks of the limestone and the location of New Providence island made it a natural market. Bahaman existence ran sleepily on.

Periods of American misfortune provided the Bahamas with their great boom periods. During the Civil War, when the North was attempting to keep the ports of the South tight closed, Nassau's accessibility made it the logical rendezvous of the blockade runners. During 1864 over $50,000,000 worth of cargo passed through the port. American Prohibition brought a second golden age. The bootlegging fleets thronged Bahaman waters in a perpetual regatta. Thirsty Florida was close by. The cases of Scotch and Gordon's Dry piled on the Nassau wharfs in cubical hills so high that the prospering town behind them was all but lost to view.

It was during the years of drought that Americans formed the habit of coming to Nassau during the winter season. Nassau, they discovered, had more to offer than mere liquid re-

freshment. The habit established, it has become more fixed with the passing of the years.

"Scenically" the Bahamas, in the accepted picture-postcard sense, have little to offer. There are more views in five minutes of Puerto Rico or Dominica than in a cycle of New Providence. But the area of sea and land round Nassau has most of what the simple tastes of men—especially rich men—desire.

Ships anchor in sheltered sea outside of Nassau harbor. Pan-American planes, two hours from Miami, drop directly onto it. Muscular diving boys—and a few rather roundly fashioned diving girls—row out to meet the ships and pursue their colorful and highly photographic trade during the short interval while the ship's papers are having the necessary things done to them. The launch that takes passengers ashore is a double-decked affair, steady and comfortable in all weathers.

New Providence from the sea is long and low. Except for the grey shape of an old fort on the summit of a ridge, no natural or man-made prominences distinguish it. The Harbor, formed by Hog Island, lying a little way offshore, and as vivid a blue as the Mediterranean ever attained, is usually filled with the little white-sailed schooners of the Bahaman sponge fishers and there are invariably a number of private yachts at anchor. Nassau is as regular a way-point for yachtsmen as Times Square is for the subway. The distance from the Florida ports is slight, the New Providence anchorage is safe and in Nassau they may find their peers.

The usual first impression of Nassau is that it is vastly smaller than one had anticipated. One has heard of it always: a conglomeration of hotels of the dimensions of Atlantic City would not be surprising. But the discovery that Nassau is tiny

almost to the point of daintiness is accompanied by no sense of disappointment. It is so much better as it is.

There is just one wharf, where the tender discharges its passengers, and the town begins a few steps away. Rawson Square, Nassau's front door, is a grassy oval planted with flower beds and set out with a few palms. Near it is a market of Bahaman "handicrafts." Handicraft in the singular would be more accurate, for what is offered is straw work. But straw work in infinite and amusing variety. Since not much grows on the islands but fibrous grasses and a variety of palms, the most has been made of them. Hats, handbags, shopping bags, knitting bags, grocery bags, probably, if there are such things, meat and poultry bags, plus sturdy baskets of all uses and dimensions are piled on stalls under the bright sun.

There is something about Bahaman woven-work that is irresistible. It is unique among the islands in that it is made up in many colors and with attention to prevailing fashions; then, tourists are natural basket buyers. The reason lies hidden in obscurity. Few things are harder to find a place for in one's normal homelife than the straw oddities one gathers up around the world, and one knows it. But it makes no difference. Baskets are cheap, they are "different"—and they are not only self-contained but containing.

The other shop keepers of Nassau might well subsidize the vendors of Rawson Square. For a new arrival instantly to be equipped with a large straw sack containing nothing must have an admirable effect on trade.

Bay Street, the five-block long main thoroughfare of Nassau, is lined on both sides with shops that are deliberately more entertaining than practical. The moneyed and the idle have

come to the islands to be amused, and the shops make their definite contribution. Skilfully, the Nassau merchants have avoided, insofar as possible, most of the articles that are commonplace in the United States. They stock the goods of England and France, their buying is governed by taste and prices are reasonably low. Sheffield silver, fluffy woolen sweaters, London chronometers and bottles of *Shalimar* are neither native nor very useful locally, but they are undeniably attractive. . . . So too, are the leisurely, well-dressed people who wander down the wide, sunny walks of Bay Street for a part at least of every day.

The "sights" of New Providence are negligible. An unhurried motorist could cover with ease every yard of road on the island in one day. What are important are Nassau's luxuriously unimportant occupations.

The main hotels, in order of their splendor, are the huge and de luxe British Colonial, the Fort Montagu Beach, the Royal Victoria, and the Prince George. There are others, but the total is not large. There is nothing cluttered or strident, in Nassau, there is none of the common resort atmosphere.

The existence of the "winter people" centers round the great hotels. Many visitors, having first come as casuals and found Nassau to their liking, now take bungalows or estates by the season, but there are few who have not lived first in one of the big inns and to a great extent social life continues to center round them.

Typical Nassau visitors rise late, breakfast in their rooms, then go to whichever of the magnificent bathing beaches suits their taste.

The Bahaman sun—the first and all-sufficient reason for

Nassau's popularity—is hot and strong and is rarely cloud-obscured for more than moments for weeks on end. Yet New Providence is north of the line of the tropics and in the course of steady winds. What to the eye seems a day of roasting, blinding heat turns out mysteriously to be not only supportable but delightful. . . . On one such squinting noon I once undertook to go for an eighteen-mile bicycle ride. My clothes were ancient, my spirit, I felt, resolute. I wore no hat. I was prepared to suffer. Yet instead of being felled in my tracks or drenched with ignoble sweat I pedalled for four peaceful midday hours in perfect comfort, with perfect dryness, and no other result than a sunburn that would have made me admissible to the Royal Yacht Squadron. The attraction of Nassau needed no further arguing.

The most famous of the swimming places is at the Paradise Beach Club, on Hog Island, a few minutes by launch across the Harbor. Paradise is the beach of the tourist folders—wide, long, snowy white, washed by lapping and translucent seas. Its higher reaches are fitted with all the impedimenta of modern fashion. There are *cabanas*, umbrellas, balls for the beautiful to run about with, held high over their heads, and heavier ones for fat men to throw at each others' stomachs. There is an excellent restaurant and skilful black waiters have been trained to plod through the sands carrying traysful of Martinis without spilling them. Many Bahaman tourists settle at once with barnacle firmness to Paradise, go no further and ask no more.

Less elaborate, but equally well endowed, is a beach a little way out of town at Fort Montagu. Seekers after privacy have

miles of lovely, uninhabited shore, most of it edged with perfect sand, where they can make their individual choice.

Of course there is golf, tennis, horseracing, and every sort of boating. In such a place it goes without saying that the best possible courts, links or whatever, are provided and made accessible. Prior information on such subjects is not only boring but unnecessary. The travel agents of the earth keep themselves briskly up to date on rates and places and the Bahaman Government maintains an information bureau a few steps from the wharf where data of all kinds are always available. Intimate knowledge of tourist Nassau can be acquired by even the most slow-witted within a few hours after landing. From then on all is placidity, sun, society and bills.

The cocktail hour in Nassau is immensely important. Nassau winter people know each other and move in linked and spreading circles. Dressing is taken seriously by both sexes. The human eye has actually, in Nassau, rested on isolated individuals who really look like the illustrations in Vogue and Esquire. . . . Cocktails run on and in. Dinners have a way of being later and later. To sit down at ten o'clock is not uncommon. There are elaborate dances almost daily in the big hotels or in one or another of the private rented estates (taken for the season with butler, cook, maids, houseboys, gardeners and chauffeur all provided by the renting agent). Bedtime comes at hours as pleasantly abnormal as those favored in New York and London. Next day the cheery round begins again. . . .

Behind and around Nassau is another, very different life. Some fifteen thousand citizens live permanently on New

Providence, many of them hardly more in contact with the world of tourists than if they lived on another planet.

New Providence, incredibly, is an island of many independent small farmers. They are Negro, of course, of a particularly black-skinned type and are characterized by a peculiar charm of manner, by excellent, modulated accents and an air of self-respect. Their houses, in little groups along the winding coral roads, or scattered in the baked plains of spiny, impassable scrub that covers even the most earthless sections of the island, are built of mortared lumps of white limestone and are usually planted round with flowers and climbing vines.

The fields from which they win their livelihood are remarkable. There are few parts of the islands, or indeed, of the archipelago, where one could spade up a wagon load of what an off-islander would regard as simple dirt. The Bahamas are basically of coral, lifted by geologic action just above the level of the waves. A pick driven in at random strikes stone. But enough of the stone itself has dusted to form a kind of holding ground.

I saw, for example, a field of almost solid rock that had been dug into innumerable pits, the pits filled in with scrapings of soil, then planted with young citrus trees. Since it was a windy corner of the island the stones taken out of each pit had been laboriously piled in curved four-foot walls at the side of each hole to protect the sapling growths. Vegetables are made to grow somehow on land that looks like a quarry. But land there is—great plantation owners have not devoured it for their own high purposes. Black men of the warm countries ask nothing more. Given an acre, not matter how miser-

able, they will somehow sweat their living from it. The indolent and shiftless black, down through the islands, is a product of the towns, the victims of the ways of a world that is not his own.

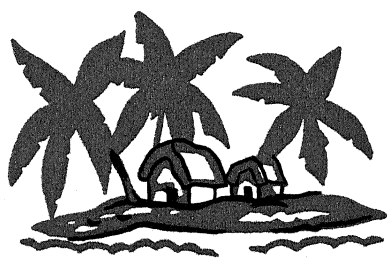
The Bahamans, if one is not too magnificently dressed, too imperviously of that outer world, revel in conversation. A quality of grace and quietness flows from them. Tourists have been known to leave the beaches, drift farther and farther inland, and find the reward of their voyage at the hut doors beside those barren fields. . . .

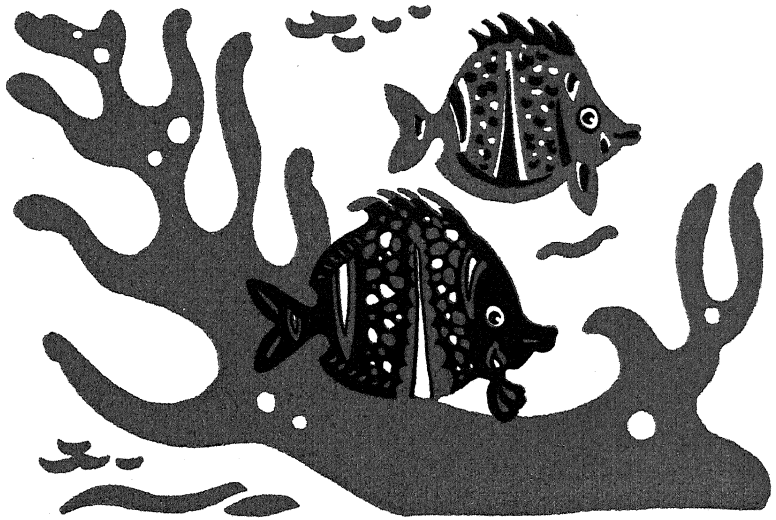
Occasionally the enterprising charter one of the sponge fleet schooners and go voyaging among the outer islands. There is magnificent fishing, a constant sense of discovery, and always the sun. But except on Bimini, where there is a kind of semi-private country club, there are no real towns on any of the other islands, and few places where a traveller can be fed or lodged.

To have a whole archipelago veiled in such mystery seems very curious. On the map the Bahamas constitute the most considerable group of islands in the West Indies—they are indeed as many and as large as all of the Lesser Antilles from Puerto Rico down. But nature has seen fit to guarantee their privacy.

Few regions in the world present greater problems of navigation. The Bahaman area is a labyrinth of coral reefs and jagged coral pinnacles, of sandbars and hidden shoals, all of them ready—nay, anxious—to rip the bottom from a wandering ship. Too, the lack of elevation of most of the islands makes them dangerous. A seaman cannot see them until his vessel is right on them; lighthouses raised only a few yards above sea

level have little range. Near approach to all of the larger islands is impossible for all but vessels of extremely shallow draught, and even those must come in by intricate and winding ways. So the towns—those that can by any stretch of the imagination be called towns—are quiet, forgotten places, the Bahaman Negroes who live in them a quiet and undemanding people.





XVIII—*BERMUDA*

BERMUDA is not in the West Indies. It has nothing to do with the Caribbean except that it is warmed and made habitable by that part of it that struggles on toward England in the form of the Gulf Stream.

But it is a way point for so many, the destination of so many more. . . .

Purists speak of "The Bermudas." It is not one island but a vaguely counted 365, grouped together on the map, say the sardonic, in the form of an outstretched, grasping hand. Practically, as in the case of the Bahamas, there are, however, only a dozen islands of any consequence and the larger ones are

so efficiently connected by bridges and causeways that the divisions are imperceptible. Bermuda it is.

The name comes from the surname of the supposed discoverer, a Spanish navigator named Juan Bermudez who managed to thread the intricate offshore reefs and make a landing in 1515 or thereabouts. His discovery, however, was not followed up for a century. Bermuda is the summit of a fifteen-thousand feet submarine mountain rising from deep seas 568 miles off Cape Hatteras and it is completely isolated from all other land. The islands are an upraised coral growth perched on a volcanic peak and the visible land is surrounded, some distance out at sea, by a ring of submerged reefs. Sailors who knew of Juan Bermudez' discovery noted it merely as a place of danger to be sedulously avoided. Even the revered founder of the colony, Sir George Somers, landed very much by inadvertence.

In 1609 Somers, in a ship bound for the recently formed Colony of Virginia, was wrecked on the Bermuda reefs. The leader with most of his men reached shore, however, and for a year they alternately suffered and enjoyed one of the most romantic castaway experiences on record. Bermudez—and proably some subsequent Spanish voyagers—had evidently followed the one thoroughly wise Spanish colonial practice. They had had the forethought to leave pigs behind them. No more, on a fertile, uninhabited island was necessary. Somers' men found their sunny isle to be a plentifully stocked larder. Even Bermuda's liability, that it has no water except what falls on it as rain (or nowadays is brought to it in the tanks of steamers) proved no serious disadvantage. The hard coral

near the shores forms innumerable small pools and rain came often enough to refill them.

The ship that had flung itself with such violence on the island was too smashed for salvage, but with correct Robinson Cruso.good fortune the Somers band were able to rescue a sufficient number of necessary tools and with them, with no small talent, they hewed down the Bermuda cedars, shaped them and made two ships in which they at last completed the interrupted voyage to Virginia.

The Somers men soon returned to England, haloed with the glamour of their fine adventure and filled with praises of the kindly isles. . . . There is a not unlikely legend that one of them, in an inn by Thameside told his story, with rich descriptive detail, in the hearing of a successful actor and playwright named William Shakespeare; that the tale so sparked the imagination of that greatest of men that from it grew the last play of his career, "The Tempest." The date is right. "The Tempest" was first produced in London in 1611, two years after the shipwreck. Flattered, Bermuda today points out the Cave of Prospero.

The practical result of the dissemination of the news of the rediscovery was that sixty English settlers were gathered and sailed to Bermuda to try their destinies. They prospered and as the years passed others came out to join them. Bermuda settled down to comfort and conservatism.

Except for fairly steady quarreling among the neighbors, Bermuda's history has been one of peace. The British title has never been contested. Wars that have troubled the larger world have effected Bermuda only so far as they have touched her trade. Sometimes, as in the instance of the American Civil

War, when the Blockade Runners turned the Harbor of St. George's into one of the busiest ports of the world, the effect of foreign troubles has been wholly favorable. At worst, Bermuda's revenue has slackened or some of her sons have gone abroad to die.

The Bermuda House of Assembly held its first session in 1620 so it exercises the right of proudly talking about itself as the oldest representative institution in any British Colony. . . . Slaves were introduced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, freed during the nineteenth, and gradually salvaged from destitution with the approach of the twentieth. Negro and colored now number something more than half of the islands' total population of thirty thousand.

The whites of Bermuda have a distinct nationality. It is a common—and completely erroneous—confusion to think of them as "English." British they are in their patriotism, in their pious and unquestioning Church-of-Englandism, in their reverence for the Upper Classes and the Crown. But all those are merely secondary emotions. A Bermudian's first allegiance is to Bermuda. His Bermudian nationality is as clearly distinct as that of an American. It is the Bermudians—the Tuckers, the Smiths, the Triminghams, the Goslings—who give the island its peculiar identity.

Most of the white families of the island who have any claim to social prominence have lived there for many generations. They own land in one or another of the nine parishes into which the islets are divided, and relatives are legion. Most Bermudians have been away at one time or another—more commonly on visits to the United States than to England—but many have not and see no really good reason why they

ever should. Bermudians are genteel, (though some have faded), and there are few who do not enjoy some measure of prosperity. Socially, they think far from ill of themselves. . . . The young man with the nice manners and faintly odd accent who sells you Dunhill pipes or tweed by the yard at one of the Front Street shops in Hamilton during the afternoon will appear as a social equal at a hotel dinner-dance during the evening. But if a winter tourist of the appropriate sex should by chance fancy the same young man so far as to contemplate matrimony, she would be likely to find that she had prospective in-laws to reckon with who unmistakably regarded themselves as her social superiors—for no other reason than that she was not Bermudian.

They play bridge, they fraternize with each other, they ride bicycles, they dress well, their conversation and their minds are insular. They have little association except as bankers, merchants and rental agents, with the American travellers who come to Bermuda, so the tourist world remains generally oblivious of them. Yet the Bermudians give the island its character, establish the atmosphere that the tourists delight in.

Bicycles and carriages drawn by lean and docile horses are still, most happily, Bermuda's only means of transportation. Motors are forbidden. Their absence is now a reasoned asset. The prohibition of cars gives Bermuda a quiet and an air of its own that brings money to its coffers. But motors were originally forbidden, one senses, because of the Bermudians' essential conservatism. Cars were new-fangled. Queen Victoria had done very nicely without them, thank you. . . . Except in three or four of the biggest resort hotels Bermuda is devoid of "night life." Hamilton after dark offers no occu-

pation more exciting than sitting down making cat's cradles. Most visitors are warmly appreciative. Cabarets are commonplace and silence is not. So the trade-minded Bermudians would now probably frown upon an entrepreneur who proposed to string up lanterns and make the night hideous with Swing. But again, the commercial wisdom has come after the fact. Hamilton, the whole delightful island, puts its shutters up at nine o'clock simply because the Bermudians are quiet folk, because they cannot keep each other awake with their too familiar conversation a moment longer.

It is all a little elderly. . . . Bermuda is supremely safe. Nothing has happened. Nothing is going to happen. Alterations in the stock market, in politics, in world affairs do not appreciably change Bermuda. Time and space have been disciplined, have been made serenely middle-class. It is all profoundly restful.

. . . . . .

A Bermuda balance sheet provides instructive reading. During a recent year Bermuda's exports—those tangibles on which most islands must depend for their livelihood, were 2,270 packages of lily bulbs, 11,000 crates of onions and a nearly equal quantity of potatoes. Her imports during the same one-year period include such items as 50,000 gallons of whiskey and 1,600,000 pounds of butter! The visible trade balance therefore was hysterically adverse. But of course in reality it is not.

In the same year 54,262 tourists came to Bermuda and stayed in periods ranging from a night or two to months: 28,324 came as cruise ship visitors. They left behind them, it is

reckoned, at least $5,000,000. . . . Statistics always fail to give really useful information, but it is unlikely that any went away badly disappointed, or with any sense that they had not had full worth for their pounds sterling or their dollars.

Bermuda is not only blessed with convenient nearness—two days from New York by some of the best steamers in the world, and a few ridiculously brief hours by plane—but it has, in earnest truth, the climate and beauty of its advertisements.

As is always the case where weather is concerned, luck plays a part, certainly, but there is no time of the year when Bermuda "cannot" be visited. In midwinter there are many days of crisp and brilliant sunshine. In midsummer, though toward its end there is usually a short season of dust and drought, the heat is tempered by the steady winds that blow forever over the Bermuda hills.

Bermuda's beauty is less variable. Even in chill winter rains or in the orange glare of summer noons it merely takes on new tones and fresh expressions.

Although the 19¼ square miles of Bermuda reach their highest elevation with a meager peak of 265 feet, at Gibbs Hill, the islands are generally hilly. Bicyclists, especially when they renew that most delightful of occupations in Bermuda after a long lapse of years, make that discovery at once. The winding white roads are always going up or down. Whichever way one rides, they have the curious habit of being always more up than down. . . .

But the undulations make for remarkable variety. One can see 19¼ square miles of Kansas or South Russia from a windmill. There is no place in Bermuda where one sees more than an immediate, limited and charming scene. The result is that

one never comes to the end of it; 19¼ square miles seem nothing. Though the road and byways of Bermuda are many, they are certainly not endless. Yet after weeks of acquaintance, of persistent exploration, there always seem to be new places and fresh destinations.

It is in the nature of a cluster of coral islands to have irregular contours. Bays, beaches, cosy little private harbors, rocky cliffs, pools, bluffs, moors, hills and peninsulas crowd upon each other in a profusion beyond counting. Due to the slowness of the means of transportation small distances become great ones and space mysteriously expands.

The larger tour ships anchor some distance out in the enclosed curve of Great Sound, close to Somerset Island across the bay from Hamilton, and passengers are taken in launches to the capital. The harbor is studded with islets of all shapes and sizes, some bare and empty, some occupied by great estates and overgrown with windbent cedars, flowering oleanders, hibiscus, wild jasmine, nasturtium, and honeysuckle. The number of flowers is infinite. Few varieties of either the temperate or tropical zones fail to do well in the Bermuda islands. But the flowers of Bermuda—exquisite though they are, and reason in themselves why many people have come to make their lives and gardens there—are a detail. The impression of Bermuda's color scheme does not depend on them. . . . It is like no other in the world. It is as hard to describe as it is impossible to forget. Basically the Bermuda harmony is a combination of two unusual greens, the almost black green of the cedars and, the glimmering copper green of the sea shallows round the shores. Both are everywhere accented by

the white Bermuda houses, planted round with all the greens that range between the two.

Hamilton, where the regular Bermuda-service steamers dock, is a town of glaring white. Its cosy, stalwart-looking shops and houses are many of them of other materials than the white coral stone that is most commonly used on the island and by no means all of them are painted white. But other tones fade into the general impression.

Front Street, at whose curb the steamers moor, is usually a scene of violent activity. Bicycles are so numerous that there are black policemen in sunhelmets to direct their traffic. The peculiarly dinky, snorting little Bermuda Railway that makes the run down the island to the old capital of St. George at the farther end has its terminus inconveniently in the middle of the road; carriages and flat, horse-drawn cargo drays tangle themselves vociferously as they struggle for the trade of the arriving passengers. Though steamers in Bermuda are of almost as common occurrence as ferries in a ferry slip, large sections of the colored population never tire of standing by to watch the spectacle of their arrival. Front Street, Hamilton is the only active place in all Bermuda.

The big hotels in the neighborhood of Hamilton swallow their hundreds of guests and never visibly disgorge them. Hotels and boarding houses a few miles away from Hamilton, on that island of stretched distances, are in the country, and country boarders are incapable of hubbub. A few Bermuda visitors do manage to make their stay a commonplace round of dressing, swimming, drinking, dancing, and more drinking, but they do it within a limited space and do not obtrude upon the common view. The great majority settle down with amaz-

ing promptness to the Bermuda tempo—that fashion of sleepy, leisurely, gracious life set long ago by the Bermudians themselves.

. . . . . .

In Bermuda there are some of the finest golf courses in the world. Due to the slowness and expense of driving long distances, most visitors usually choose the one nearest whatever hotel they chance to be stopping at and remain content. . . . There are private tennis courts everywhere, and magnificently kept club courts where international championships are played. Fishing is a mere matter of hiring a launch and setting forth. Small boat sailing—the preferred sport of the Bermudians themselves—can be safe, easy, intricate or dangerous, depending on one's taste and the course chosen. . . . During certain seasons horse races are held at a mid-island course and during most of the year bemused and uncomprehending Americans have an opportunity to witness that strange rite called Cricket.

Each day, with one's impulses and energies adjusted to the Bermuda pace, soon has a way of centering around one adventure. It may be extremely slight—a five mile bicycle trip down a new road, a swim at a new beach, a trip over the offshore reefs in a glass bottomed boat—but a single event suffices. The necessities of sleeping, eating, living comfortably and in a land of perfect cleanliness, and of merely resting in the sun, leave time for little more.

There are hundreds of minor "destinations" that one discovers for oneself. Each parish of the island, queerly enough, has a subtly distinct character, ranging from the fashionable busy-ness of Paget through the bucolic peace of Southhamp-

ton, all the way to St. David's Island, in St. George's, where life runs on its simple course as if Hamilton and all tourists were a thousand miles off.

Major destinations—the indispensable "points of interest"—are few and the seriously idle reach none of them. There is a group of lovely limestone caves near the far corner of Harrington Sound, all or any of them worth an afternoon's sightseeing. St. George, an older, smaller town than Hamilton has a quality so distinctly its own that those who fall in love with it turn their backs grimly and forever on all else the island offers. . . . A round trip in the odd Bermuda Railway offers with the minimum of effort a panorama of varying and charming scenery. A climb to the lighthouse of Gibb's Hill, the highest point on the island, provides a memorable view. . . .

Everything is simply available. One may do as much or as little as one likes. Nothing is superfluous, nor is anything so vitally important that it may not be "missed" with a clear conscience.

Few people have spent more than a week on Bermuda without idly, or with perhaps momentary seriousness, discussing the prospect of taking a house and settling down forever. Bermuda has a quality unique among all places of the earth. Bermuda makes old age seem charming. Charming, that is, if it might be passed there in the sun and by the sea of that fair island. As the time for departure comes one daydreams that one would welcome the late years far sooner than one thought. . . .

XIX — *WAYS AND MEANS*

GENERAL advice on travel is like general advice on anything else. It is always being sought, it is never more than half listened to and it is almost never followed.

The Caribbean area, and the islands and ports along the continental mainlands adjacent to it, has in recent years become one of the most simply accessible on earth. Americans, the most restless and happily curious of mortals, discouraged by the nerves of Europe and the bad tempers of Asia, have made the belated discovery that variety, foreign-ness and infinite change await them just beyond a near horizon. That discovery has now been encouraged to the utmost.

The question of how-to-get-to-them is a matter merely of one's taste and purse.

The swiftest route south is of course by air. Nor is any other way so comfortable or so excitingly beautiful. Pan-American flying boats, steady, extraordinary monsters that consume space at the rate of 180 miles an hour, reach Trinidad in a single day from Miami. Other intermediate services drop passengers—their number grows with geometrical progression each year—in Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Antiqua, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Port of Spain, the Bahamas or Panama. The Caribbean route, quite apart from the admirable skill and caution with which the flights are conducted, is one of the safest

anywhere. No flying is as yet done after dark. The Caribbean is free from that greatest hazard of flight, ground fogs, and bad weather is not only regulated largely by seasons, but when it does come it generally gives warning well ahead.

Few dwellers in the North Temperate zone have much understanding of the true nature of the tropical climate. Starting with the summer heat of their own country as a standard, they imagine the tropics as growing progressively hotter and hotter than that all the way south to the equator. As a matter of fact, there are few places along the low latitudes right round the world that even on their rare worst days attain such breathless temperatures as accompany a "heat wave" in New York, St. Louis, or Chicago, and the great proportion of the time the hot countries merely enjoy a pleasant warmth.

There are factors other than geographical position that bear on the climate of locations in the Caribbean. Tropical hills, for example, are invariably cool. Distances of a mile or two may make an immense difference. A port town in a bowl of hills that shut off prevailing winds may be broiling—while a town on the same island on the other side of those same hills with the trades perpetually on it will be deliciously cool—cold enough at night for sweaters, light coats, and bed with blankets. Happily, what makes the West Indies peculiarly habitable is that they do lie in the direct course of one of the great "trades"—as the persistent sea-winds are called—of the world.

The same beneficent influence makes most of the area notably healthy. From the Virgin Islands to Trinidad serious fevers are unknown, nor is the Caribbean nearly so afflicted with the long list of diseases we have come to accept as "common" in Europe and the United States. Pulmonary troubles are mark-

edly rare, as are serious disorders of the mind and nerves. One goes to the Caribbees to recover from—not to contract—ailments. The average of man-days lost through illness is far less in the American tropics than at home.*

Winter—(that is, the months of winter of the North Temperate Zone)—finds the Caribbees at their best. But the months of our summer are not accompanied by anything like a proportionate rise of temperature among the islands. They are hotter in July than in January, certainly. But not much, nor unbearably. What is more to be considered in the tropics, in any given place, is the rainy season or the dry season, not summer or winter. In the Caribbean, though there is variation of the schedule from island to island, the "rainy time" usually begins in June, lets up in August and September and sets in again until about the middle of December. But that is not to say that the dry months are months of drought, or that the rainy seasons are shadowed by perpetual leaden skies. Few days the year round pass without some sunlight, few weeks without some rain.

Those bugaboos of the West Indies—hurricanes—rarely occur except in the late summer and early autumn. There is a useful rhyme of the old slave days:

"June, too soon.
July, stand by!
August, come it must.
September, remember!
October, all over."

* Typhoid inoculations are probably advisable for travellers planning an extended stay in the West Indies, though the risk is very slight. Public water supplies are usually excellent and quite safe. Tourists need have no fear of the drinking water provided them at any reputable Caribbean hotel.

When they do come it is impossible to exaggerate their terrors. But due to the chances of nature, hurricanes, like lightning, rarely strike twice in precisely the same place and sometimes whole seasons pass without any land area being damaged. Since they are so serious, the conditions that give rise to them are attentively watched by a string of meteorological bureaus and it is usually possible to give warning of their coming many hours or even a day or two ahead. Planes are then promptly grounded—or, better, are flown, at their own hurricane-swift speed, safely out of the zone of danger. . . . Flight, of course, has the disadvantage that it deprives travellers of that part of the trip that many treasure most—the voyage itself. It is a pleasure not lightly to be foregone, particularly in the tropic seas between the two Americas.

Ocean travel usually has its drawback. There are days on the Pacific and Atlantic that reduce those unhappy mortals who are "bad sailors" to a whimpering wonder as to why anyone *ever* goes anywhere. The Caribbean can be practically guaranteed to behave itself. I have almost never seen its blue waters so agitated that they could not be navigated safely in a rowboat. . . . That is not to say that they never are, but chances are enormously against it. Even the most habitually green-faced deck chair occupants commonly rise briskly on the second day and zestfully resume eating and exercise for all the rest of the voyage.

There are several "regular" Caribbean steamship services out of New York.* The best, from the point of view of comfort,

* Passports are unnecessary for U. S. passengers who hold return tickets. Stopover voyagers had best provide themselves with them, chiefly to insure their free admission to the United States on their return home.

is undoubtedly that of the Grace Line. The Grace steamers are new and large and they have been designed with tropical needs in mind. Instead of the somewhat doleful canvas sackful of water that many smaller vessels hopefully offer in lieu of a swimming tank, the Grace vessels have sunk large tiled swimming pools in a roomy space on the after deck and set it round with those umbrellas, tables and rubber mattresses that are nowadays indispensable to "sunbathing." The dining saloon, instead of being buried on decks E, F, or G as it so often is, is on the top deck and is fitted with an ingenious sliding roof that on fair nights exposes the canopy of sky. Foods, cabins and service are of that peculiar excellence that the best of American-managed ships provide—despite the lingering prejudice many people still have against our once wayward American marine.

Furness Withy & Co. run two steamers down through the smaller islands. They are primarily cargo ships, but the one-class passenger accommodations are entirely comfortable. No other service touches so many ports that are generally inaccessible. From St. Thomas, by way of the Leeward, the French and the Windward Islands, few of any size are omitted and though the stops are short, the same steamer halts again at most of the list on the way north again. Round-trip passengers are given an opportunity for a second—and instructed—look. . . . The Royal Netherlands Steamship Co. winds a circuitous way through the Caribbees and along the Main, caring for its passengers with traditionally Dutch excellence of service and with immaculate cleanliness. Round-trip passengers in all cases are offered special rates. Since none of the regular routes duplicate each other a certain number of

people who have become West Indian addicts take each of them in turn during successive years.

The cruise ships are in a different category. The ports they touch at are invariably interesting and usually combine great variety in a single trip. But cruise managers and cruise passengers understand that the cruise itself is the thing, that the atmosphere and occupations of the ship are more important than the attractions of the shore. So notably is this true that the non-cruise type of traveller is amazed to discover that in each port many passengers do not even trouble to go ashore and that the majority of those who do seldom penetrate farther than the shopping streets, the bathing beach and the best hotel. What must be evaluated therefore is the ship, not its itinerary.

Each winter more than a hundred Caribbean cruises are made by big steamers taken from the Atlantic run, usually under charter by one or another of the big tourist agencies. What is important, however, in the case of charter, is not the charterer, but the original flag and the line of the ship itself.

A Swedish ship remains Swedish in cuisine and atmosphere, whether Thos. Cook has hired it or National Tours. English ships, take them ever so far down among the latitudes of the sun and pack them no matter how tightly with Yankees, remain as English as brussels sprouts. Knowing this experienced travellers—and inexperienced ones who are good guessers—can usually make a congenial selection.

The French Line cruise ships are particularly popular. Since the winter trade in the West Indies has now been established for some time, most of the ships of the *Compagnie Generale* have been built with an eye to future use in the tropics: cabins

have large windows—(or vigorous blowers!)—game decks are spacious and the common rooms are situated aloft and may be opened wide to the breezes of the night. Importantly, food and cooks have come from France. Duty-free wines and other drinkables are provided at rather less than shore prices. What have become the customary amenities of Caribbee Cruising are lavishly supplied.

The first article of the cruise credo is that passengers must be steadily furnished with entertainment. If they don't want to be entertained, it is argued, they can sit still and not be, can't they? So from the first day of the voyage to the last there is something of some sort going on while the ship is at sea. There are movies, there are lectures about the islands, there are Bingo games and Horse Races. All can be attended, or with equal ease avoided.

In the evening, on the cruise ships, formal dressing is customary. Indeed, from the extent of it, one might guess that some passengers come for no other reason. For the entertainment of the Dressed, therefore, besides what is brought from the bar, the French ships carry two orchestras, one that abides always with the ship and another noisier, brisker one, from Manhattan, as well as a small corps of night club entertainers. There is dancing in the Grand Salons and dancing on deck . . . both, on a soft night in the tropics, with or without moon, spectacles of unexpected beauty.

At the ports arrangements are usually made for sightseeing motor trips in private cars. There is an extra charge for them and they are generally worth taking. Otherwise, while ashore, one is left strictly to oneself.

Apart from the regular passenger lines and the cruise ships,

one of course may also wander pleasantly, and often very cheaply, through parts of the West Indies on ships planned primarily for cargo. Time was when that leisurely experience —preferred by some travellers to all other means of transport —was available only to the most veteran voyagers. One had to "know"—or search diligently. Advice about them is still not easy to give. Freight ships go where trade beckons and when it stops beckoning they abruptly stop going. So information about them in even so relatively permanent a form as a bound book is apt to become obsolete between the typewriter and the bookstore. However, the tourist agents can generally produce information about them if pressed and a few smaller agencies—there is one called Tramps Tours—exist for no other purpose. It is enough to know that there are freight ships that do go to the Caribbean, that one can find out about them, and that many are wholly comfortable. . . .

The Caribbean presents no insurmountable problems in the matter of those irritating strings across the travellers' path, language and currency. English, in proportion, is the most common tongue among the islands. In Cuba and Puerto Rico, barkeeps, taxi drivers and bystanders can usually summon enough American among them for the moment's purposes, and in the Dutch possessions local linguists leap from behind every tree, delighted to exercise their skill. . . . In the French islands one speaks French. There is no successful substitute except desperate wavings of the arms. Shouting, few tourists realize, helps not at all. So few of the blacks of Guadeloupe or Martinique are hard of hearing that it is scarcely worth while.

Though currencies vary maddeningly, American money is generally accepted, at an increased premium that is negligible in the case of such small transactions as are commonly made. Or amounts of any size can be exchanged at the local banks. Somehow, it all works out. The fumbling and discussion that goes with money changing is merely part of the cheerful West Indian experience.

Clothes in the Caribbean tropics are made more of a problem than they need to be. Since wearing unfamiliar garments is a definite part of the liberation of a holiday, many travellers garb themselves in curious chromatic costumes that defy analysis. A zipper-fronted yellow jersey shirt was never tropical except in the eyes of the haberdasher's clerk who sold it. Shorts are worn on the business streets of the thoroughly civilized towns of the West Indies only by invaders from the cities of the north. Tropical sun helmets, though they are pleasant, are no more generally worn in the Caribbean than diving helmets. Sun glasses—that ghoulishly homely recent fashion—may sometimes be comfortable at sea, and ashore in some of the white towns—for the blue and grey-eyed. The dark-eyed were supplied by the Lord with sun-filters of natural pigment. If they choose most people can grow accustomed to the full powers of any sun with a very little practice. The whites who live permanently in the islands never wear sun glasses—nor do they commonly wear hats.

The most commonplace wash suits and wash dresses of ordinary summer are really all one needs in the American tropics. But, of course, if the soul craves more—as it may legitimately do—go the limit. The residents of the West Indies have be-

come hardened, their lives lack excitement anyway—and the horses have been trained not to whinny or to run away.

. . . As in all quarters of the world, the human contacts are the most important, the source of the most abiding pleasures —or the greatest aggravations.

The natives of the West Indies, it must be borne steadily in mind, are often desperately poor. It is impossible for them not to look upon the average English or American tourist as limitlessly rich. Comparatively indeed, they are. A white man does not have to pay much income tax before he seems wealthy to an ill-nourished black who must work desperately hard to earn two hundred dollars a year for the support of himself, a wife and numerous progeny, who probably has never been able to accumulate more than five dollars at a time in his life. . . . So if they ask a penny or two more for the still absurdly cheap, small articles they sell, there is no harm in tolerance, sometimes mere decent charity in paying what is asked. They are not to be shouted at nor reviled for it. It is so easy merely to decline. The harsh voice of a stranger—against whom the poor are helpless—can add needlessly to the burden.

For the most part, peddlers, beggars, boatmen and all, they are gentle people. Their hands are slender and their mouths are soft. There is no race in the world more responsive to a common friendly smile, or to simple courtesy. It is the smallest investment one can make; in all ways the most rewarding.

INDEX

[*This Index is intended to serve as a supplementary and compact guide in itself. Apart from the usual references to names and matter in the text, with page numbers, there will be found, under the headings of the islands and countries of the Caribbees, additional information not included in the text. The familiar system of using one, two, and three *s has been adopted as a simple method of evaluation. . . . However, the taste so indicated is merely the author's own. Others' opinions might materially differ. Nor has any attempt been made, either in text or Index, at encyclopaedic thoroughness.*]

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